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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

First Loves
By Amy Shields, PRC

First loves hold a special place in most people’s hearts and minds. The first time I fell in love was freshman year of high school and it was the romantic kind. He was a football player and I was a rural girl living in California who liked him well enough. Then he bought a motorcycle and, with his new shiny toy, became the coolest thing since sliced bread. Just like that — the sun rose and set on “John.” Classic first love.

Also, classic breakup — the world had ended, the heart was broken, rivers were cried and every detail of that blip of time together memorialized. And, of course, of all loves, that first one is almost always the one mere mortals remember the most details about . . . even 30 years later.

My first professional love was qualitative research. I didn’t meet it on a blind date or online, but was introduced innocently enough by a friend of my brother’s who went to work for a call center that conducted both qual and quant marketing research. At the time, I wasn’t looking for a commitment and still wasn’t sure what I wanted to do when I grew up. I was 26 years old.¹

While the scientific basis of quant fascinated me, qual won my heart. I overlooked its flaws, didn’t understand or care about its limitations and bonded with the “human” side of it. I related to using small groups of people to guide and support hypotheses and loved that it was descriptive rather than predictive. Qualitative research was a good partner because it resonated with me — the concept of “emotions” and “reasons” essentially being one unit, working together. While emotions obviously determine the reasons in our brain that are most important, we use the reasons as a filtration device to determine how we are going to behave. It’s the understanding of these emotionally charged reasons that often lead to success in determining what consumers will buy, what resonates from a marketing standpoint, etc.

Qualitative research has held me captive for over 20 years. But as is commonly known, when something isn’t watered, it withers and dies. Time — changes in our environment — creates opportunity and shifts that we either adapt to and embrace, or find ourselves left behind; the jilted lover. While some are shiny toys to become infatuated with (see motorcycle example above), some are here to stay and answer the demand of the market…and tomorrow’s world.²

While my relationship with qualitative marketing research remains as passionate as it was that day in 1992 when I first laid eyes upon it, I have come to water it with more attention, recognizing that complacency is a formidable enemy. Qualitative research remains a viable and important approach in the research landscape, but in order to fully grasp its value today and appreciate the special moments we’ve shared, it seems appropriate to keep the conversation alive and well with regard to its useful applications (amongst all stakeholders),³ ⁴ new norms of hybrid research and enhanced opportunities.⁵

Fortunately, I’m surrounded by plenty of good company to do exactly that. ♡

Amy Shields, PRC is MRA’s director of research and the editor of Alert!. She can be reached at amy.shields@marketingresearch.org.

² See How the Emergence of Dashboard Sampling Is Impacting Quarantine Periods on page 71 about, in part, the modern sampling world and need for device-friendly studies.
³ See section on conducting qualitative research in David Harris’s article How to Write Shorter Surveys: Treat Questionnaire Design as a Professional Discipline on page 88.
⁴ See Optimizing Qualitative Design…by Asking the Right Questions on page 46.
⁵ See Online Qualitative Recruiting: Is There a Better Way? by Sheena Swanson Bacon on page 36.
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No Regrets
By Ted Donnelly, Ph.D., PRC

At the risk of sounding cliché, I cannot believe how fast the time has gone. It was a whirlwind of a year serving as chairman of an association I grew up within and admire deeply. It was a year full of challenges, debates both fierce and collegial and a few surprises along the way. As the proverbial baton is passed to the very capable hands of Vaughn Mordecai, it is a time of great reflection for me. I feel satisfied, yet find it hard to let go.

During my term, I’ve noted much curiosity regarding the role of the chairman. Industry friends, colleagues, associates and constituents regularly questioned the time, commitment and personal motivations behind accepting this position. Researchers, of course, ask lots of questions by nature. The tone of the questions has varied. Some have expressed a level of gratitude I would say should be reserved for those who serve in our armed forces. Others have sardonically mocked me with pity as if I just told them I lost my dog. This is always an interesting one for me as it implies a form of indentured servitude. The line of questioning is fairly consistent:

- Do you give up your life for a year?
- Isn’t it like running a second business?
- Is it a major distraction from your day job?
- Did your family miss you?

These are all fair questions. However, the one that I would prefer to linger on is, “Was it worth it?” To be completely frank, it is one of the most rewarding things I have done in my career. Really. And this goes not only for this past year as chairman, but is a reflection of all the years I have had the pleasure to serve on MRA’s board of directors. This is not simply the musings of someone who has the benefit of looking through the rearview mirror. I genuinely enjoyed the entire ride and will continue to serve, and I welcome the challenge of strategic initiatives assigned by our new chairman.

The apprehension from outsiders is understandable. It has been a significant commitment for many years now. It challenged my time, tested my business acumen, and tried my leadership. However, for every core benefit of association membership, it is monumentally accelerated when you volunteer. Think of it as turbocharged membership benefits. Let’s just take a look at the big three:

Networking
Before I volunteered, I made acquaintances at conferences with whom I would make small talk maybe twice a year over a drink. As an active volunteer, I have made friends and business associates for life. We share life moments and we share business opportunities both upstream and downstream. I have trusting, loyal relationships with key industry contacts that never would have been cultivated so deeply had I not been actively involved.

“...our industry faces many challenges that require the horsepower of the entire profession to address.

Professional Development
I am entering my seventh and final year on the board of directors. Not including staff, the number of board members has fluctuated from a high of 21 voting members when I first started to a strategic downsizing of 11. When you run the numbers, you can see that I have had the pleasure to work with many leaders in this industry. I can honestly say I have learned from every person with whom I have served. Sometimes it was simply how they articulated a business problem, the angle they approached in formulating a plan or how they prioritized solutions. Not surprisingly, they drew parallels from their own businesses, which were often vastly different from my own. The learning in these collaborations are pure gold for a business professional. Having the opportunity to develop strategy and governance with other executives has substantively helped me grow as a leader within my own organization.

Education
MRA has a number of reputable publications that are excellent vehicles for disseminating information on legal and regulatory issues impacting the industry, ethical debates and innovations that continue to evolve the methods and expectations of our work. If you are not reading Alert!, MRA Update or following MRA’s Twitter feed, I would encourage you to do so. Having said that, the knowledge you will acquire will pale in comparison to the wisdom you gain debating with other industry leaders and setting policy and strategy around government affairs activity and research standards. It is an experience you can’t replicate through blogs and articles and one that has made me a better researcher and adviser to my clients.

As we transition to new leadership, I will share that I am content with the progress our board made this year yet am hungry to continue to serve. Time was short and I still feel I have more to give. Yes, it was a substantial commitment, but it was extremely gratifying. It was rewarding to give back to an industry that has been so good to me and to have the opportunity to make an impact on an industry that I am passionate about—one that continues to inspire and challenge me every day. If I can leave one lasting message, it is to get involved. Our role in a free market society is critical to both economic development and a dynamic consumer culture. Notwithstanding, our industry faces many challenges that require the horsepower of the entire profession to address. Never allow self-doubt to creep in and inhibit volunteerism. You will be surprised how well your everyday skills translate into contributing on a committee or overseeing association business. Find an area that interests you and go in with an open mind and a passionate heart. I promise you the experience will give back. The time will be well spent. Our profession needs you and I will be serving by your side.

Ted Donnelly, Ph.D., PRC, is the managing director of Baltimore Research and the Immediate Past Chairman of MRA’s Board of Directors.
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ALERT! MRA’S MAGAZINE – THIRD QUARTER 2015
Several requests that it do so. The law has—has declined to distinguish between the agency tasked with enforcing the law, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC)—and telemarketing calls also curtailed research and its enforcing regulations curtailing content. Whether intended or not, the law made no distinction exempting calls by legitimate research calls, but the law the congressional record of curtailing telemarketing. There is no mention in cut and dry. The TCPA was about curtailing congressional intent back in 1991 is rather "unwanted calls." The historical record regarding the too-broad definition of an autodialer, clarity as to what defines human intervention in the dialing process and improved limits on liability for reassigned cell phone numbers all of which create an unnecessary level of risk or burden for researchers. These fixes may make it more difficult to sue legitimate marketing researchers. In the meantime, we’ve published Compliance Considerations for New TCPA Regulations and Telephone Research1 on MRA’s website and answered some initial questions2 to help guide you as a researcher to navigate the legal minefield out there.

It may be fashionable in some quarters to blame our parents for the ills of the world, but I can’t really blame my father for this one. That there is at least one app dedicated to help prevent “unwanted calls” highlights the seriousness of this challenge to MR. Best to apply equal or greater diligence so that it cannot be used on you. 

David W. Almy is MRA’s CEO. He can be reached at david.almy@marketingresearch.org.

1 http://www.marketingresearch.org/article/gallup-settles-costly-tcpa-lawsuit-12-million
2 http://www.marketingresearch.org/article/compliance-considerations-new-tcpa-regulations-and-telephone-research
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ROXANNE GRAY, Vice President Market Research Manager, Wells Fargo
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JOE HOPPER, President, Versta Research
Presenting: Finding Stories: How Wells Fargo Built a PR Research Platform to Quadruple Its Earned Media
MARC ALLEY, PRC
Marc Alley, PRC has spent the last four years as the head of marketing research at 1st Global, a company that helps CPAs and advisors improve their service. He has been in the marketing research industry for more than 15 years, recently receiving his Professional Researcher Certification and has advised companies on a number of categories.

TOM WUJEC
One of the world's leading experts in innovation, creativity, and technology disruption, Wujec joined Autodesk in 2006 as a fellow, where he currently charts long-term strategy, introduces disruptive technologies and facilitates innovation practices internally as well as for leadership teams in many industries.

JENNIFER GOLBECK, PH.D.
Dr. Jennifer Golbeck’s social media research has influenced industry, government and the military; she is a pioneer in the field of social data analytics and a leader in creating human-friendly security and privacy systems. In addition to her work as a professor at the University of Maryland, she writes for top online news organizations, including Slate and The Atlantic, and appears frequently on NPR and commercial talk radio.

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Before developing and managing Samsung North America’s innovation process in California, Scott Lazarczyk spent two years in Korea as a marketing director for Procter & Gamble.

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Jennifer Golbeck, Ph.D.
Dr. Jennifer Golbeck's social media research has influenced industry, government and the military; she is a pioneer in the field of social data analytics and a leader in creating human-friendly security and privacy systems. In addition to her work as a professor at the University of Maryland, she writes for top online news organizations, including Slate and The Atlantic, and appears frequently on NPR and commercial talk radio.

Marc Alley, PRC
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WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME YOU SET ASIDE FOUR HOURS TO STUDY ONE TOPIC IN-DEPTH? HERE’S A CHANCE TO DO IT TWICE.

Choose two of the following five courses for $499 – a phenomenal bargain!
Finding the Low Hanging Fruit Through Predictive Analysis
Designing Device-Agnostic Questionnaires
Storytelling That Maximizes Research Application
Applying Behavioral Economics to Market Research Projects: 3 Applications
Quant Toolbox – Conjoint Analysis
See course descriptions on the next page.

In-Depth Training / Maximize your investment by taking courses onsite for an added fee. Sunday afternoon and Monday morning you’ll spend four hours each on your choice of two topics for eight study hours total before the conference begins.

IN-PERSON RESEARCH TRAINING COURSES
A DIFFERENT APPROACH TO EDUCATION

**New Content** / A prerequisite of speaking at CRC is the delivery of new content. Even veteran speakers are challenged to deepen their arsenal. **Strict Vetting** / Each speaker’s proposal is hotly vetted with an insanely high standard for quality. Only one in four speakers makes it through. **True Experts** / Speakers are chosen not for the brands they represent, but for the ideas and talent they have to offer.

AN ENVIRONMENT FOR REAL DIALOGUE

**Ideal Size** / This “right size” conference of ~500 feels relaxed and intimate. **New! CR-Only Workshop** / Uber-Cool CR-Only Workshops & Solutions Exchange – Tackle your biggest business challenges! After Wednesday morning’s keynote, corporate researchers will form 20 CR-only structured workgroups and spend 2 hours brainstorming their toughest business challenges. After lunch, the 20 workgroup leaders will deliver 90+ minutes of rapid-fire solution-sharing and Q&A for all CRs in attendance. Many CRs consider this the most valuable part of CRC! **Beyond the Lecture** / Speakers are challenged to do more than just lecture. Get ready for interactive sessions, cool new resources and meaningful Q&A.
PRE-CONFERENCE: SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2015

Choose two of the following five courses for $499 – a phenomenal bargain!

**SUNDAY**
1:00 PM
Designing Device Agnostic Questionnaires
GREG TIMPANY, Senior Competitive Intelligence Manager, Global Knowledge
(Research Rockstar Instructor)

Questionnaires: What types of questions and scales are treated differently by device type? Do participants treat Likert scales differently when on a smartphone versus a laptop? How about rank order and other scale types? What can we do in questionnaire design to make sure we are getting consistent results across device types? A great class for anyone wondering how to make sure mobile survey data isn’t skewing the overall data set. Note: This class is designed for market researchers with at least five years of experience with questionnaire design.

**MONDAY**
8:00 AM
Storytelling That Maximizes Research Application
DELANEA DAVIS, Business Consultant & Market Research Expert, Solstice Strategy Partners LLC (Research Rockstar Instructor)

Market research does not have to be boring. Grab your audience’s attention, and keep it, using storytelling techniques. If you have ever wondered why everyone loves TED Talks, take this class. Students will learn storytelling techniques that grab an audience's attention and keep it. Students in this class will learn how to use research results to construct and tell a story. Starting with lessons in storytelling for executive audiences, and ending with a practice exercise, students will find this four hour class both fun and substantial. Class content includes storytelling examples, how to construct a story, and how visuals can support storytelling (data visualization and infographics techniques). Both quantitative and qualitative research examples will be used. Note: This class is designed for market researchers with at least five years of experience with research reporting and presentations.

**ON-SITE TRAINING**

Designing Device Agnostic Questionnaires
ON-SITE TRAINING

Storytelling That Maximizes Research Application
ON-SITE TRAINING

Applying Behavioral Economics to Market Research Projects: 3 Applications
NAMIKA SAGARA, PH.D., Behavioral Scientist and Consultant, Sagara Consulting (Research Rockstar Instructor)

Consider these critical market research questions: How can we encourage survey response honesty? How can we optimize pricing research accuracy? How can we get research participants to give us more accurate information when self-reporting behavior, especially future behavior? The field of Behavioral Economics has key lessons that address these important questions. Don’t miss this fun, fast-paced class for a precise look at how BE can be applied to market research quality improvements. Note: This class is designed for market researchers with at least five years of experience with quantitative research.

**ON-SITE TRAINING**

Finding the Low Hanging Fruit Through Predictive Analysis
KATHRYN KOROSTOFF, President, Research Rockstar LLC

How to find your brand’s most attractive customers using predictive analytics. Upon completing this class, students will know how predictive analytics can be used to find a brand’s most attractive customers. Class content includes logistic regression, Hierarchical Bayes, and Latent class modeling. Students will learn how these techniques are used, the implications for questionnaire design, and will review examples of related output and reporting. Attendees should have a solid foundation in basic statistics prior to taking this class.

**ON-SITE TRAINING**

Quant Toolbox – Conjoint Analysis
AARON HILL, PRC, Vice President, Client Services, Sawtooth Software

Conjoint analysis is one of the most powerful quantitative tools available, but it can be overwhelming to researchers who don’t have experience with it. In this workshop, we’ll introduce conjoint analysis using simple examples that will allow you to understand how the process works. We’ll show you what conjoint analysis can do for you, teach you how to structure your conjoint analysis experiment, and then walk you through how to interpret the results. And we’ll do it all with simple Excel spreadsheets and math you learned by third grade! Come join us to add conjoint analysis to your quant toolbox.
This will be a great conference. The agenda has the perfect mix of push and pull and a healthy dose of information overload.

**TOM WUJEC, Fellow, Autodesk**  
CRC Opening Keynote Speaker

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**MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2015**

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| 2:15 PM  | **How Better Meetings and Wicked Problem Solving Propel Research-Based Innovation**  
**TOM WUJEC, Fellow, Autodesk**  
*BONUS! 2016 TRENDS: Return on Imagination will be introduced with a brand new report on Extreme Personalization and the Maker Culture Movement.*

Author and editor of five books, a fellow at software giant Autodesk, a veteran TED speaker and a pioneer in business visualization, Tom Wujec has efficient innovation figured out: we must employ wicked problem solving and hold better, more visual meetings that engage stakeholders in the data and swap push for pull, talk for make, and take for give. But what does that look like and how can you facilitate it? Learn proven approaches from Wujec's award-winning work with Fortune 100 companies to encourage exploration, customer engagement, prototyping and innovation testing. Wujec will also illustrate simple ways to measure the return of innovation success, revealing immediately applicable principles whose brilliance lies in their powerful simplicity.

Sponsored by: [QUESTER](#)
MORE ON MONDAY, OCTOBER 5, 2015

AOL on Increasing Your Qual Agility
JANEL FAUCHER, Research Manager, AOL
Learn how AOL was able to integrate agile research techniques — including co-opting a UX tool for non-UX testing and reviewing video interviews in-house — while maintaining the quality standards on which researchers pride themselves. Through new processes, AOL made quick-turn qual results within 24–48 hours a reality. Find out how they effectively deal with large amounts of qual data . . . and steal their Interview Progress Tracker Template to get organized for continued work with your stakeholders.

Insights Into the Mind of the Omnichannel Consumer
PRABHATH NANISSETTY, Vice President, Insights and B2B Product Development, InfoScout
Do you understand the mind of the omnichannel consumer? Conducting research and making decisions to delight this new consumer requires an understanding of omnichannel shopping behavior, linking attitudinal, behavioral and verified longitudinal purchase data as well as understanding shopping behavior across the total retail and non-retail market.

Leveraging Methodologies and Optimizing Your Product: How NRG Developed a Connected Home Solution
KAREN HARVIE, Research Manager, NRG Energy
ALLYSON KUPER, Consultant, Bug Insights
Simply measuring customer preferences often results in wasted investment and failure to fully optimize a product. Learn new ways to think about optimizing your products and how cost can be introduced. This team designed a three-step process (best/worst conjoint study, internal education for the product team and design of the choice-based conjoint—CBC, study and portfolio optimization) to leverage methodologies, understand the current state and identify unmet stakeholder needs. Spoiler alert! The optimization step blends conjoint utility with cost in order to determine ideal products given customer preferences and the cost to deliver each unique product feature tested. This information is loaded into an online tool to test combinations of product features to understand how changes in the product make-up impact both preferences and cost.

Sport Market Research’s New MVP: Comparative Data*
RUDY NADILIO, President, Dapresy
HAYNES HENDRICKSON, President, Turnkey Intelligence
*This is a paid session. In addition to the requirement that they provide education, these speakers are welcome to sell their products/services.
In sports and entertainment, competition for customers’ discretionary budgets is getting fiercer by the day. Teams and properties are chomping at the bit to identify research solutions that may provide an edge and help to ensure strong ticket and sponsorship sales regardless of how their teams perform on the field. With the help of Dapresy, Turnkey Intelligence has unveiled a product that helps teams procure next-level game day experience and ticketing insights quickly and cost-effectively. Via the Surveyor Network, more than 200 properties now have the ability to view data from their customers against competitive set, league and geographic averages. How is this a game-changer? Attend this session to find out!

Digital Analytics 201: Vail Resorts on Why Raw Numbers Don’t Tell the Whole Story
LINDSAY OGDEN, Sr. Analyst, Digital Analytics Implementation, Vail Resorts
Want to feel empowered to think critically and to call “caution” when you suspect a conclusion could be faulty? This session will inspire analysts and decision makers to learn more about rigorous and scientifically-sound analytical thinking. Data only tell us part of the story. When a metric is up by a few points, how do we know it’s truly “improved”? Be prepared to think about stats, but don’t worry — she did all the math for you already.

Session to be presented by Research Now*
*This is a paid session. In addition to the requirement that they provide education, these speakers are welcome to sell their products/services.
**Improving for Storytelling Success**

**CHIP BREWER, Vice President, Business Development, The Smart Cube, Inc.**

Improvis comedy has much to offer for the corporate storyteller. Using fun, creative, innovative tools, you will learn proven techniques to turn stale data and "yawn-ware" into powerful, engaging and memorable stories. One of Brewer's first teachers was Seth Myers, now of "Late Night" fame. The instructor honed the process at ImprovBoston and will share techniques with you to: (a) build confidence, (b) learn how to listen and support others, (c) learn the fundamentals of storytelling, (d) know when and how to take risks and, finally, (e) have a huge amount of fun while doing all of these things!

**The New Research Paradigm: Ideation to Iteration to Validation**

**BARRY JENNINGS, Director, Commercial Insights, Microsoft**

**PAUL JANOWITZ, CEO, icanmakeitbetter**

Method agnostic but dogmatic in process. Find out how moving from a "project-based" insights organization to a "process-based" organization produces results that are better, faster and actually less expensive. Learn how using insight communities with an "all of the above" approach delivers deeper insights and better respondent engagement. See how to integrate the CMR function across the organization by leveraging an integrated approach that bridges the gap from ideation to iteration and validation to more quickly deliver better products that can be marketed smarter.

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**Finding Stories: How Wells Fargo Built a PR Research Platform to Quadruple its Earned Media**

**ROXANNE GRAY, Vice President Market Research Manager, Wells Fargo**

**JOE HOPPER, President, Versta Research**

This session isn’t about finding stories in research. It’s about designing surveys that ensure compelling storylines… regardless of how the data falls out. Like many researchers, you want market research to generate leading-edge insights, the kind that capture intense audience interest. This story-building methodology will get you there, from conceptualizing the research and constructing stories from data to reporting in the form of headlines, each substantiated with a sequence of data. Follow a national survey of 875 LGBT Americans to learn how Wells Fargo made this methodology work.

**Handling Practical Legal Compliance Challenges: A Privacy Officer Panel**

**HOWARD FIENBERG, Director of Gov. Affairs, Marketing Research Association**

A panel of privacy officers for major marketing research companies will discuss how to handle the practical, legal compliance challenges in any research organization or department, building respondent privacy into your operations and what threats and opportunities they see coming over the horizon as the research and privacy industry evolve.

**Tiptoeing Through Innovation Quicksand: Methods to Die For & Methods That Might Kill You**

**JEFFREY HENNING, PRC, President, Researchscape International**

Every new technology is promoted with inflated claims of "innovation" as providers desperately seek a niche that can make their product or service stand out. Early adopters are often unwitting guinea pigs to this market evolution. Henning (a repentant former technology provider) will share the results of recent research from the Marketing Research International Institute (MRII) and others concerning the adoption rates of emerging technologies. Additionally, he will share qualitative findings on practical, real-world lessons with regard to what’s working and what’s not working quite as well. Learn from others’ painful experiences so that you can determine what emerging methodologies are right for your organization.

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**Tiny Research, Big Impact: Hallmark on Doing More With Less**

**KELSY SAULSBURY, Consumer Understanding & Insights Manager, Hallmark Cards Inc.**

Budget constraints trigger a focus on boiling down to what is absolutely essential and important. The lessons of creative downsizing found in the Tiny House trend can inspire us to look at both processes and methods, including triangulating multiple tiny sources. It’s about getting really rigorous around prioritization and impact in delivering insights. In this talk, attendees will see a whole new spin on doing more with less. “Tiny” lets us approach downsizing not as a problem to deal with, but as a creative and energizing challenge to solve.
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2015

REGISTRATION

FULL, HEARTY EGG BREAKFAST

Keynote

Point-Counterpoint: What’s the Big Deal With Big Data?
ANNE PETTIT, PH.D., Chief Research Officer, Peanut Labs
MARC ALLEY, PRC, Head of Market Research, 1st Global

BONUS! 2016 TRENDS: Retail Tech and the Changing World of How People Will Buy

Many in the C-Suite think Big Data is the silver bullet to solve all of their organization’s informational needs. In this candid, debate-like discussion, Annie Pettit and Marc Alley will explore issues that corporate researchers face, including the data scientist’s view of the corporate researcher’s role, how to overcome common misconceptions about Big Data, what works and doesn’t when applying Big Data methodologies within existing insights departments’ accepted processes, how data scientists and traditional researchers can collaborate, key MR elements that need to be maintained when using Big Data and specific skills CRs might need in order to keep pace.
### 9:30 AM - 10:30 AM

**Applying Customer Delight to Improve the Research Experience**  
**JILL DONAHUE, Senior Manager, Brand Insights, Nestlé Purina North America**  
**STEPHENIE GORDON, PRC, Vice President, Schlesinger Associates**  
**SANDRA BAUMAN, Owner & Principal, Bauman Research & Consulting**  
**MARY AVILES, Qualitative Consultant, Connect 4 Insight**  

Delighting customers in unexpected ways is the key to inspiring positive word of mouth. Some brands are supplanting their traditional loyalty programs with empowered employee models designed to deliver customer delight. We decided to put our money where our mouth is by investigating the transactional elements of market research from both the participant and the insight consultant side. What would delighted participants mean to the industry? Could such an approach impact data quality?

### 10:30 AM - 11:15 AM

**Networking Break**

### 11:15 AM - 12:00 PM

**How Technology Has Transformed Consumer Journey Research**  
**PAUL DONAGHER, Managing Director, Consumer & Retail, Market Strategies International**  

Every consumer brings a complex personal puzzle to any brand journey. To put this puzzle together so that brands can effectively understand the consumer journey, researchers must use a variety of in-the-moment tools and techniques to illuminate each touchpoint, trigger and moment of influence. Using real-world case studies, this session will show how important it is to be agnostic about the tools and to match the capability to the need. A variety of photo analytics, micro-surveys, life-logging, eye-tracking, facial-mapping and other approaches can and should be deployed.

**How Do You Really Feel? Viewer Attitudes Towards TV Advertising**  
**ASAF DAVIDOV, Senior Manager, Ad Sales Research, Hulu**  
**BARBARA LEFLEIN, President, Leflein Associates, Inc.**  

People say that they hate advertising, but the ad-supported TV model persists. Consumers often say one thing but behave differently. Reliable measurement of viewer attitudes is necessary to develop product strategies and to support ad sales efforts. Learn the methods and results of a national online survey of 1500 persons, 13–54 years old, plus an oversample of 150 Hulu subscribers. This research explored attitudes towards ads, as well as correlations between ad avoidance, viewing behaviors and show preferences. In addition, an ad avoidance segmentation was developed to better inform advertising strategies.
Sometimes It Takes a Knife: Using Mixed Methods Research to Tackle Tough Problems
KELLI ANDERSON, Market Research Manager, Florida Blue
NATHAN HOFFMANN, Market Research Consultant, Florida Blue

More than anything, researchers want leaders to use their work and take action. This can be frustrating, particularly when the research is about longstanding problems that are well known and continue to rise to the top of customer needs. Florida Blue will illustrate how they anticipated this problem, designed a study to create a compelling mix of data and customer stories and taught leaders how to think differently with an innovative presentation technique (think a knife, apple, and invention kit). Learn how to find inspiration from different sources and how to develop a comprehensive approach to this common frustration.

Stop Writing Concepts Like Ads in GQ
STEVE NOLLAU, President & Chief Strategy Officer, Brädo Creative Insight
BOB CUNEO, President & Chief Creative Officer, Brädo Creative Insight

One of the most frustrating yet avoidable issues facing market researchers today is having a great strategic idea die because the concept it is being judged by is poorly written. Concepts are not ads, but they are often written like them. And when they are written from the client’s perspective, they will likely be compelling to the client but probably not so much to the customer. Learn how to write truly compelling concepts in this informative yet light-hearted session. This presentation aims to inspire all market researchers to never let a poorly written concept make it into a study ever again.

Samsung’s Innovation Process Journey – A Rubik’s Cube Redux
SCOTT LAZARCZYK, Vice President, Innovation Process & Research, Samsung North America
MANVIR KALSI, Director, Emerging Business Research, Samsung North America

BONUS! 2016 TRENDS: Understanding 3 Critical Sub-Segments of Millennials

Does your organization have an innovation strategy? How about an innovation process? Innovation in the technology sector continues to accelerate with new communication devices, electronics and digital software services becoming increasingly complex in an ever-growing ecosystem. The sheer number of combinations is spiraling out of control. Samsung returns to one of our favorite 80s toys, the Rubik’s Cube, to share lessons on the organizational structure and process clarity needed to lead innovation in 2015 and beyond. They examine the number of organizational pieces and functions, the principles involved in combining these assets and the paramount role that marketing research can play in solving your organization’s Rubik’s cube. Hint: The journey has just begun but you are the first side that needs to be solved for; the second step is mixing it all up again!

Better Brand Tracking: Stop Asking and Start Listening
ZACK NIPPERT, President, MotiveQuest

The old brand-health measurement system revolves around the core targets of awareness, preference and purchase. Conventional marketers ask questions in the marketplace to determine where the market lies on the buying-cycle continuum. But instead of asking consumers if they would recommend a product, i.e., NPS, we can actually measure the number of times they organically recommend a brand. Learn how clients are gaining a competitive edge by leveraging new data sources.

IQ+EQ: Big Data and Primary Research in the Era of Decision Intelligence
GREG HEIST, Chief Innovation Officer, Gongos, Inc.

It’s rare to see an analytical model informing research or an ad hoc study driving a predictive framework. Yet, as data becomes more varied and voluminous inside organizations, so too does the pressure to leverage it to drive business outcomes. Likewise, approaches that uncover why consumers behave as they do continue to support bottom-line strategies. Without empathic knowledge, organizations fail to build their EQ. In this session, learn how primary data can, and should, be linked with “hard” data streams to inform smarter decision making.
Hershey’s Innovative Program for Retail Concept Development
ROBIN ALEX, Sr. Manager, U.S. Shopper Insights, Hershey
ANDREW ZOOTA, PH.D, Senior Vice President, MarketVision Research
Both retailers and manufacturers use shopper insights to guide their in-store and pre-store marketing concept decisions, but what’s lacking is a systematic and comprehensive program for measuring important touch points with shoppers. Hershey has worked with major retailers to develop concept benchmarks and score cards showing what works and what doesn’t and to funnel every new concept decision through a shopper-centric program for evaluation. The program evolves with each new concept and has become an important part of helping Hershey and their retail partners enhance the shopping experience.

SEAN CAMPBELL, CEO, Cascade Insights
Depending on which study you read, 50 percent or more of the sales cycle now takes place in the marketing funnel. And where the nature of a sale has changed, research needs to change as a result. In this session, you’ll gain knowledge about a set of inexpensive (and, in some cases, free!) tools and best practices to handle this shift. Understand the marketing funnel that proceeds the sales funnel in order to produce complete studies that look at the buyer’s journey from end-to-end.

The Other Side of the House: Corporate Affairs Research vs. Market Research
EDWARD LARGO, Director, Research and Corporate Responsibility, Altria
WILLIAM STEWART, President & Founder, Povaddo
In a sense, corporate affairs research moves beyond the consumer and into the realm of the general public, including corporate responsibility strategy, stakeholder engagement, corporate branding and communications, corporate social programs, public policy and legislative advocacy. Companies often bypass the in-house research team for this work. Does this make sense or not? This presentation will take participants on a tour of the other side of the house to explore how leading companies are using research to guide corporate affairs decisions and business strategy.

Winning at Innovation – Beat the Odds With Gameful Design*
SANDY MCCRAY, Insights Curator, Intengo
*This is a paid session. In addition to the requirement that they provide education, these speakers are welcome to sell their products/services.
If you're using traditional research in the early innovation process, you're facing a bit of a con. Inflated self-perception leads to overstated intentions, so respondents may bluff you into pursuing the wrong new products/services. Because people are much better at predicting the actual behavior of others, the collective wisdom of crowds will make you an innovation high roller even with limited budgets and timelines. Gameful design keeps players highly engaged, offering you a winning hand of quant and qual insights for innovation success. Let Intengo show you how to beat the odds!

The State of Mobile Market Research: A Panel
JACKIE LORCH, Vice President, Global Knowledge Management, SSI
DAN WOMACK, PRC, Senior Manager, Insights, Aflac
PRABHATH NANISETTY, Vice President, Insights and B2B Product Development, InfoScout
MIRIAM ALEXANDER, Senior Vice President, General Manager, Lieberman Research Worldwide
SIMA VASA, Founder & Chief Evangelist Officer, Paradigm Sample
Finding respondents to participate in surveys using traditional media became a huge challenge for the marketing research industry. Within the last decade, our industry altered its approach by seeking and embracing technologies and methodologies that have come to form the core body of mobile marketing research. Our esteemed panel will reveal technological breakthroughs in the near future that will impact this growing, worldwide marketing research discipline in both the quantitative and qualitative realms. Moderated by Dan Womack.

2:50 PM NETWORKING BREAK
3:35 PM

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### 3:35 PM

**Juggling Information to Identify Valuable Insights**  
**LEN FERMAN, Managing Director, Ferman Innovation**

The former head of ideation at Bank of America is also a world champion juggler (juggling while jogging). In this session, he will teach the entire audience how to juggle (literally!) as they learn to apply a new approach to data analysis. Ferman follows the principles of front-end innovation to identify new product/service concepts and applies them to the development of key insights in three steps: explore, ideate, evaluate. Didn't think you could learn to juggle? Afraid of new methods? Prepare to surprise yourself.

### 4:30 PM

**Taco Bell's Authentic Consumer Journey for Stakeholders**  
**DANIELLE BLUGRIND, President (Formerly Director, Consumer Insights at Taco Bell), Insightography**  
**LYLE SWART, Principal (Formerly, Director, Consumer Insights at Taco Bell), Outside-In Brands**

Learn how to design a secondary and primary research foundation that customizes your learning and how to bring it to life with an event that's entertaining, interactive, and informative. For many companies, consumer trends and generational marketing have become synonymous with an annual 30,000 foot presentation, but what if you could create an interactive, multimedia conversation to give stakeholders the experience of being a Boomer, Xer, Millennial, or Gen We? Taco Bell's company-wide event helped to create empathy for each generation's shared experiences, values and present life-context . . . and how they relate to their brand.

### 6:00 PM

**What's Right With CX?**  
**MARYELLEN DEMARCO, PRC, Senior CX Consultant, Avtex Solutions**

MaryEllen DeMarco got inspired by the values represented by CX and did some qualitative research to examine the relationships between marketing researchers and their CX departments. Do you want to work with your corporation’s CX department more collaboratively? This presentation will be educational — what is CX? — and reflective — what do market research and CX professionals think are its strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for collaboration? October 6 is CX Day, so let’s figure out how to make collaboration happen!

### 6:00 PM

**How United Way Got Past Known Insights to Learn to Talk Like a Millennial**  
**KRISTIN THOMSEN, Manager, Market Research, United Way Worldwide**  
**JEN DROLET, Managing Partner, iModerate**

What's the value of bucking convention and immersing yourself in an audience over time? For United Way, it’s the difference between talking with Millennials and talking past them. From lending a hand to a friend with cystic fibrosis to volunteering for breast cancer causes in memory of a loved one, discover the bonds that inspire Millennials to forge intimate relationships with organizations and to advocate for a cause. Additionally, hear about the steps United Way and their provider took, including pre-study strategies, to ensure a successful partnership.
## CR-ONLY DAY: WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 7, 2015

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| 8:30 AM  | **Are They Spurious Correlations?**  
**Evaluating Insights From Social Media**  
**DR. JENNIFER GOLBECK, Director, Human-Computer Interaction Lab, University of Maryland**  
**BONUS! 2016 TRENDS: Preparing for the Mysterious World of Gen Z Centennials**  
Back by popular demand! Computer scientist Dr. Jennifer Golbeck is one of the top-rated keynote speakers in MRA history (it’s true—we checked). We're bringing her back to help us avoid the Big Data trough of disillusionment (or to get out of it, for those who are already there). As was introduced in her first keynote with us at ISC, new algorithms can uncover all kinds of detail from people’s social media and other Big Data profiles. But the results shift over time, predictions don’t always make logical sense and the results can feel unreliable or irrelevant. This time, Dr. Golbeck will discuss the types of insights computer science can find and will delve into 1) which parts of them are meaningful in other contexts, 2) which outputs to trust, and 3) exactly how these algorithms can be applied for unique and useful research results. |
| 10:00 AM | **CR-Only Team Workshops & Solution Exchange – Tackling Your Biggest Business Challenges**  
After Wednesday morning’s keynote, corporate researchers will form 20 CR-only structured workgroups and spend 2 hours brainstorming their toughest business challenges.  
After lunch, the 20 workgroup leaders will deliver 90+ minutes of rapid-fire solution-sharing and Q&As for all CRs in attendance.  
Many CRs consider this the most valuable part of CRC. We can’t wait to see what you come up with!  
Wednesday’s private workshops are an opportunity for peer-to-peer benchmarking and collaboration for corporate researchers only. However, we’ll share all results in an anonymized written report to all who attend CRC, including providers!  
Before the conference, you and other corporate researchers will receive a link to a brief survey to identify your top three business challenges. On Wednesday, you will join a team with similar challenges to find solutions as a group. An established process and guidance through leadership at each table will help to maximize the value of the experience for all participants. |
| 12:00 PM | CR-ONLY LUNCH                       |
| 1:00 PM  | CR-ONLY SHARED LEARNING SESSION     |
YOU ALWAYS LEARN MORE ON THE PLAYGROUND ANYWAY

CR MEET & GREET
Monday, October 5, 2015, 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM
This is the first (but not the last!) chance for corporate researchers to gather behind closed doors. Bring your business cards!

NETWORKING IN THE EXPO (2)
Tuesday, October 6, 2015 10:30 AM to 11:15 AM
Tuesday, October 6, 2015 2:50 PM to 3:35 PM
Share your problems. You’ll get solutions. Education continues through CRC’s 50+ exhibitors who offer a wealth of experience through their work with others – which may just benefit you! These brainiacs could serve as your trusted partners, offering products and services to optimize the development of marketing research insights and strategies.

DINNER PARTY IN THE EXPO
Monday, October 5, 2015, 11:30 AM to 1:00 PM
We’re taking the party where all the fun is anyway. Imagine the best giant dinner party you’ve ever attended. Add 50+ exhibitors bearing gifts.

To feel understood is powerful. To share problems, cathartic. That’s why all networking events are included in the cost of registration. We know conversations with other researchers are what make CRC special, and our agenda gives you plenty of opportunity to have both formal, structured roundtable discussions and casual conversations over food and drink.

BREAKFASTS (2)
Tuesday, October 6, 2015 :20 AM to 8:20 AM
Wednesday, October 7, 2015 7:20 AM to 8:20 AM
Free bacon, and more! We’re not fruit-and-bagels people. It’ll be the full spread, if you don’t sleep in.

ANHEUSER-BUSCH BREWERY TOUR AND DINNER PARTY
Tuesday, October 6, 2015 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM
We’re bringing all our new friends to Anheuser-Busch’s iconic brewery, a popular St. Louis destination for obvious reasons.

CR-Only Lunch
Tuesday, October 6, 2015 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM
A relaxing break or a working lunch – your team decides.

“Let’s go invent tomorrow.” – Steve Jobs
BE IN JEREMY GUTSCHE’S NEXT BEST SELLER! / NYT Best Selling author Jeremy Gutsche will be inviting every corporate researcher attending CRC to take part in an interview, leading to a special lunch-time report and a mini book about our critical themes, opportunities and best practices. The telephone interview will be quick, but closely related to your experience, so please be sure to take part!

FUTURE LAB / Experience drones, oculus rift, and even consumer research in Virtual Reality. Trend Hunter’s team will be onsite to show you a sneak preview of their virtual inspiration cloud where you can find your next idea through a series of inter-related virtual rooms. FREE TREND REPORTS / Connect with a Trend Hunter and they will offer you one of 50 different premium research reports, free. Explore the latest in Millennials, marketing strategy, retail technology, flavor innovation, or the category of your choice!

2016 TREND REPORTS / You’ll be among the first in the world to preview 2016 trend content based on insights from Trend Hunter’s 100,000,000 person focus group via four fast-paced, TED-style talks prior to each keynote session:

1. Extreme Personalization and the Maker Culture Movement
2. Retail Tech and the Changing World of How People Will Buy
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4. Preparing for the Mysterious World of Gen Z Centennials

“Let’s go invent tomorrow.” – Steve Jobs
DON'T MISS THE CHANCE TO SPEAK WITH OUR PARTNERS

PRICING & HOTEL INFO

Corporate researchers, sometimes abbreviated as “CRs”, are researchers whose clients are internal. For example, if you work for FedEx, the government or a nonprofit, you are likely a corporate researcher. If you work for Nielsen or Ipsos, you are likely not a corporate researcher.
REGISTER FOR CRC!

Pricing & Hotel Info

**Everyone** / Keynotes and sessions, hot breakfast Tuesday and Wednesday morning, lunch on Tuesday, all Expo breaks, Dinner Party in the Expo, and Anheuser-Busch Brewery Tour and Dinner Party.

*Conference ends for non-CRs after the Wednesday morning keynote.*

**Corporate Researchers** / Monday: CR-only Meet & Greet. Wednesday: CR-only workshop, lunch, and shared learning session.

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*Conference rate is $179 / Call 314.621.9600 and indicate you are with MRA. Reservation deadline is September 11, 2015*

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2015 ISC Recap
SAN DIEGO

MRA's annual Insights & Strategies Conference (ISC) was held June 3-5, 2015, at the Hilton San Diego Bayfront Hotel in sunny California. The event included over 500 of the best and brightest marketing research professionals, proving once again that ISC is the place to get smart(er), recharge and reboot!
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Ashley Bilko, Market Research Manager, Transamerica
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Paul Conner, CEO, Emotive Analytics
John Crockett, VP - Digital Innovation & Data Management, Envionics Research Group
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Christopher Daniels, Head of Consumer Insights & Brand Strategy, StubHub
Delanea Davis, Business Consultant & Market Research Expert, Solstice Strategy Partners LLC
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2015 AWARDS

HONORARY LIFETIME MEMBERSHIP AWARD
Recognizes an MRA member for a lifetime commitment to outstanding individual service to MRA and the marketing research profession.

“It is an honor to receive the Honorary Lifetime Membership Award from the MRA. The MRA has been an important part of my professional career, early on for my professional development and later as a place for me to contribute and give back to our great industry. I will cherish this honor always and thank the association and my peers for this wonderful recognition.” – Steve Schlesinger

MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD
Recognizes an industry professional who over their career has demonstrated tremendous leadership and dedication resulting in remarkable contributions to the marketing research profession. MRA membership not required.

“What an honor to receive the Meritorious Service Award from the MRA. Marketing research is my life and I feel it is critical for all of us to do our part to keep this a healthy and vibrant industry. More importantly, at any age, we want to make our dad proud, and this made him very proud.” – Meritorious Service Award Winner, Ken Roberts

Additional Meritorious Service Award Winner, Shelley Zalis (Far right.)

IMPACT AWARD
Recognizes an industry professional, team or organization that has demonstrated tremendous vision, leadership, and innovation, within the past year, that has led to advances in the marketing research profession. MRA membership not required.

“Being recognized by the MRA is a great honor. Their leadership is something we admire and benefit from on a regular basis. Good ideas without collaboration are just that, good ideas. At Magid we have people who take good ideas and make them better, provide the fuel to ignite them and offer the care to nurture them. That’s innovation and that makes an impact. Thanks again to the MRA for the recognition.” – Jack MacKenzie

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR AWARD
Recognizes the top MRA volunteer who has brought excellence in service to the Association during the past year.

“It is truly an honor to be the recipient of MRA’s Volunteer of the Year Award. The opportunity to work with passionate staff members and brilliant volunteers is something that I relish on a daily basis. I’m forever indebted to the MRA as it has and will continue to be an integral part of my development at Quester and within our industry. I feel the sincerest of gratitude for this acknowledgment.” – Volunteer of the Year Award Winner, Tim Hoskins (Present via FaceTime!)

Volunteer of the Year Award Winner, Elizabeth Merrick (Far right.)
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2015–2016 BOARD OF DIRECTORS
The Marketing Research Association (MRA) is proud to announce the results of its annual Board of Directors election.

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A special thank you to the following volunteers for their years of service on the Board and continuing efforts on behalf of the association:
Jill Donahue
Jerry Haselmayer
Jeffrey Henning, PRC
Elizabeth Merrick, PRC
ONLINE QUALITATIVE RECRUITING: IS THERE A BETTER WAY?

By Sheena Swanson Bacon
Marketing research recruiting remains (and probably will always remain) a key component of gathering critical intelligence about products, services, companies, brands and issues. Important as it is, though, recruiting is an often overlooked piece of the research process that can be greatly improved by utilizing technology to replace manual (and time-consuming) processes.

Is there a better way? Change requires boldness and new strategies to improve the process and results of qualitative recruiting. Today we have new technologies and strategies that interweave the tried-and-true traditional recruitment process with innovative digital recruitment platforms. After implementing thousands of online qualitative research projects around the globe and testing multiple recruiting processes and technologies, we’ve identified ways to achieve three critical benefits for recruiting:

1. Reduce recruiting time (improve efficiency)
2. Improve respondent quality
3. Improve communications between researcher and recruiter

Reduce Recruiting Time (Improve Efficiency)

A short time ago, qualitative recruiters relied heavily on client-supplied lists, personal connections or the old phone book. Recruiters routinely spent several days dialing potential respondents and laboriously filling out paper screeners. Much of this work was wasted since there was no way to quickly identify well-qualified respondents for a particular study. Recruiting staff often worked for days without seeing progress. Thankfully, process and technology have dramatically changed the game.

Invest Time in Planning and Preparation

Though it is simple and requires no fancy technology, detailed planning and preparation are skimmed over far too often. The objectives of both recruiting firm and researcher should be perfectly aligned, so the recruiter should set expectations regarding recruiting management and project communication. The recruiting firm must ensure that it fully understands the scope of the recruit before the recruiting begins, to develop a strategy and to communicate that strategy with the researcher. This small time investment early in the process will eliminate gray areas and, undoubtedly, yield dividends throughout the project’s lifespan. After all, a single misunderstood quota or unclear screener question can lead to several additional hours, or even days, of backtracking and re-work.

Create Better Data

One key to better recruiting is a robust panel. A strong panel management system with plenty of relevant data points, such as demographics or purchasing behavior, allows samples to be finely targeted and yields faster and more accurate recruiting. A recruiting firm’s investment in building their panel profile means that respondents can be targeted more accurately, with recruiters spending less time screening respondents who will never qualify.

Just Say No to Paper Screeners

Paper screeners are simply not scalable, so they are not efficient. We use technology to create a two-step recruiting process that utilizes technology, but also maintains the value of a personal contact and screening process. We program two surveys for every recruiting project. One pre-screener containing key screening criteria is blasted to thousands of respondents. The other is a phone screener that recruiters use for detailed screening and confirmation.

The benefits of this method are twofold: first, the survey link can be emailed to large numbers of respondents (often thousands) and, second, the researcher gains an early read on actual incidence and trouble spots. Recruiters then have the data they need at their fingertips to conduct the phone screener. This method requires more time early in the project to program each screener, but makes up for it with significant efficiency gains throughout the recruiting process.

Improve Respondent Quality

The quality of qualitative recruiting is a hot topic. While email recruiting can bump up recruiting efficiency, some researchers have concerns about sacrificing quality using this method. Together, technology and best practices ensure that recruiters can work quickly and maintain the integrity of the recruit.

Panel Management System

A well-maintained qualitative panel management system is one technology that should provide researchers a reliable quality check with respondents. Panel technology should routinely track and weed out “cheaters,” “repeaters,” or those who don’t meet minimum articulation requirements. Unique identifiers for each respondent and disciplined data validation methods help maintain clean data, which is critical to ensuring accurate targeting and the best respondents. Data from each online and phone screener should be integrated with the panel management system to track...
every detail of the recruit and to continue building the breadth of respondent data available in the panel.

Re-screen and Confirm
After selecting the best prospects from survey responses, we believe it is best practice to place an actual call to respondents to re-screen them. This phone call is another quality safeguard. The recruiter asks screening questions once more to ensure consistency between online and phone responses, ensure the respondent is tech-savvy (as needed), has the appropriate devices for any technology used in the project, and understands the study’s expectations and requirements. This confirmation call is particularly important for studies that involve real-time methodologies so that the recruiter can ensure the respondent will be an articulate participant who demonstrates effective oral communication.

Improve Communications Between Researcher and Recruiter
Today’s technology allows for instant communication, but recruiting firms have been slow to use technology in ways that can truly revolutionize the researcher’s accessibility to information. By combining traditional communication best practices with new ways of using technology, recruiters can provide researchers with a wealth of valuable recruitment information at their fingertips.

A Kick-Off Call
A kick-off call between recruiter and researcher to discuss objectives, timeline and deliverables is an absolute must. Not only will project scope and important details be solidified, but both parties can connect on a more personal level than email-only communication will allow. Verbal communication often eliminates miscommunication that can plague email. The call also allows greater insight into the researcher’s underlying motivations, anxieties, desires, etc. A savvy recruiting firm will use these verbal cues to prioritize and shape recruiting strategy. In all cases, researchers should follow up the call with an email that details key points and next steps. Starting on the right foot and making an attempt to build a solid relationship from the beginning will smooth out the entire recruiting process, making it more enjoyable for both parties.

Recruiting Management System
There are only a few recruitment management systems on the market, but investing in one enables recruiters to increase recruiting efficiency and provide project teams with ample real-time data on recruiting health. Once online and phone screening is completed, the final data can be automatically pushed to a Web-based spreadsheet, much like a standard recruiting grid in an excel spreadsheet. Although the spreadsheet will have all the pertinent information one would expect, there is very little manual data entry required. After a brief review of the new recruits, the project manager can quickly share the information with the client, eliminating crucial time from the daily update process.

Such technology provides full transparency into exactly how the recruit is progressing. This transparency, in turn, allows project managers to deliver recruitment information to clients early and often throughout the recruitment process. Instead of waiting for several days to get a feel for screener problem areas, the technology will help project teams precisely identify terminating or low-incidence areas and consult with the client on potential solutions within the first few hours of recruitment.

...TECHNOLOGY ALLOWS FOR INSTANT COMMUNICATION, BUT RECRUITING FIRMS HAVE BEEN SLOW TO USE TECHNOLOGY IN WAYS THAT CAN TRULY REVOLUTIONIZE THE RESEARCHER’S ACCESSIBILITY TO INFORMATION

Share Real-Time Data
One of the most beneficial features of a recruiting management platform is its ability to facilitate communication between recruiters and project managers and, ultimately, between project managers and researchers. The system’s dashboard should contain all pertinent project data at a glance, ideally utilizing infographics to improve communication value. When a new respondent is recruited, the system should send notifications to the entire project team that contain key characteristics of that respondent and lists completion status on all quota groups for that project.

Additionally, the system should have an integrated chat function that allows project teams to share pertinent notes. This feature allows multiple recruiters to monitor progress and communicate details in real-time, dramatically reducing the chance of duplicating efforts or missing vital project changes.

Strive for Continuous Improvement
A recruiting firm committed to improvement will take the time to analyze successes and failures and make adjustments as needed. One method is the project post-mortem debrief. In this procedure, the project manager reviews with the operations team what worked well and what could have been improved. New creative solutions utilizing new processes or technology can then be shared across the organization, allowing team members to build on each other’s successes and avoid making mistakes others have made. Key takeaways can be digitized cataloged into a knowledge-base for easy reference.

What’s Next for Online Qual Recruitment?
Transparency and improved communication with clients should be a major ongoing focus of recruiting firms. The feedback we hear most often from our clients is that they need comprehensive information and consultation at every step of the process so they can make better-informed decisions, especially when the recruit is being more difficult than anticipated.

The worst possible situation for a researcher is knowing the recruit is going poorly, but not understanding why or how it can be turned around. The answer lies in being able to improve transparency throughout the recruit by allowing researchers and end-clients to access recruit data in real time.

Over the coming years, the industry should see a marked divide between recruiting firms that hold on to legacy systems and those that embrace technology to drive smarter processes. Researchers need partners, not order-takers, who will take full responsibility for the success of recruitment and not only provide researchers with comprehensive and objective feedback on recruit status, but also consult on the best ways to achieve project objectives. To meet the growing demands of clients and qualitative researchers today, successful recruiters must commit to taking a strategic and transparent approach versus the “let’s jump on the phones and cross our fingers” method of the past.

Sheena Swanson Bacon is director of project management at 20/20 Research and is responsible for the execution of thousands of online qualitative research projects annually in more than 100 countries. In 2014, she was recognized by Survey Magazine as a key influencer in the research industry.
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WHAT THE RISE OF CALL-BLOCKING TECHNOLOGY COULD MEAN FOR TELEPHONE RESEARCH
by Howard Fienberg

Call-blocking technology — to which the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has recently given a “green light,” according to the FCC Chairman — may pose a significant threat to the use of survey, opinion and marketing research by phone. This technology could enable millions of households to block all research calls.

However, many MRA members noticed that the recent comments filed jointly by MRA and CASRO with the FCC1 did not address the subject, as those comments focused on the TCPA restrictions on using autodialers to call cell phones.

The TCPA rule changes, approved by the FCC on June 182 and released on July 10,3 are themselves significant, but as many people have since asked, did we just forget


to address the call-blocking rule change in our comments? Actually, no. While threats still exist in the proposed rules as we understand them, call-blocking technology is less a regulatory/legal problem than a consumer/industry challenge.

MRA originally treated call-blocking as a legal problem, filing comments in January in opposition when the National Association of Attorneys General first proposed it to the FCC. However, numerous telecommunications lawyers, both inside and outside the FCC, insisted that (1) multiple companies, including telecommunications providers, already offer call-blocking services and (2) such services already are legal. From that standpoint, the FCC is merely providing extra clarification to Title II of the Communications Act, which already allows for call-blocking with the subscriber’s consent. The conclusion we reached was that call-blocking is already happening, and while the new clarification may popularize such services, it is not something for which you can simply blame the FCC.

In this case, consumers are asking for what they think they want. In many instances, consumers just hate robocalls. In others, they don’t want to receive calls from anyone they don’t already know. Both preferences, when activated through call-blocking services, will also block telephone research calls, whether intentionally or not.

There is no evidence that call-blocking systems targeted at robocalls could or would differentiate between telemarketing robocalls and research calls using an autodialer. Widespread adoption of such blocking will probably block most autodialed research calls. With call-block services already in place like Google Voice, a service that screens all calls and could lead to the blocking of most unrecognized numbers, the blocking of unrecognized callers already exists in the marketplace, whether manual, autodial, or robocalled and whether consumers might want to receive those calls or not.

In the years ahead, what percentage of households will adopt call-blocking technologies and will they be individually configured to accept or reject research calls?

If you’ve ever screened a call by evaluating the displayed caller ID before answering, you’re already call-blocking, albeit manually. But if a consumer never receives a call in order to make a decision to accept or reject it, they cannot know what they are missing. While some call-blocking service providers have said they keep a whitelist of approved numbers, including a few prominent public opinion pollsters, most research calls would likely be blocked right along with everything else.

What can the research profession do about call-blocking technology?

That leaves the research profession with a dilemma that isn’t likely to be remedied through the government regulatory system. Instead, it requires broader, more challenging efforts.

As an industry, we need to consider multiple options, some of which are more feasible than others.

...call-blocking is already happening, and while the new clarification may popularize such services, it is not something for which you can simply blame the FCC

Work with the call-blocking technology developers and service providers to better understand how their systems operate. Telephone researchers need to learn how blocked calls are treated within the telecommunications infrastructure. Do blocked calls register as a “blocked call,” as just a “dead line” or as a “no answer?” Can the systems evolve so that the numbers do register as blocked to the dialer, such as by returning a specific code, tone or signal? If an RDD sample of 2,096 results of simply “no answer,” clients will not be happy at the cost of producing a replacement survey, and they might doubt the wisdom of working with that call center or sample provider. More seriously, a bank conducting customer satisfaction research to a list of its customers who specifically opted-in to research by phone might never be able to reach them, with the opt-in achieved by the bank being unknowingly countermanded by the customers’ opt-out via call-blocking. Either way, researchers would never know why people could not be reached. Without a technical way to quantify the impact of call-blocking technology, researchers will struggle to account for it in their research studies.

Convince call-blocking technology developers to provide (preferably default) opt-ins for consumers for legitimate research — not sales — calls.

Produce an industry whitelist of legitimate research providers (to facilitate option 2), with the understanding that the unified self-regulation necessary to make it work and gain acceptance would not be easy.

Convince consumers to trust their phone lines again. Years of studies of respondent cooperation and respondent attitudes toward research have showed unhappy trend lines, and overall response rates reflect those trends. Could we reverse the trend lines, waging a public relations campaign to pitch consumers on the value of research participation, while also campaigning for federal and state authorities to more aggressively prosecute telephone-delivered scams, usually from overseas, that prey on respondents? Unfortunately, to be effective, this advocacy campaign would likely be prohibitively expensive.

Recruit respondents proactively to become telephone research respondents, similar to the functionality of online panels, and have the respondents add the researchers to their own whitelists. Unfortunately, this counters the presumed advantage of telephone research over online research: a statistically representative random sample.

Develop an industry-wide opt-in registry of respondents willing to receive calls from legitimate researchers, or a similar government-run registry. The federal government already operates a registry of people who don’t want to receive a certain kind of call (telemarketing), so why not a registry of people who want to receive a certain type of call (research)?

There may be other remedies. What are your suggestions?

There are no easy answers. We are facing a social and technological revolution and need to learn more, quickly, before we take our next leap. NOTE: A version of this article was originally published for MRA members only at http://www.marketingresearch.org/article/what-call-blocking-technology-could-mean-telephone-research

Howard Fienberg, director of government affairs for the Marketing Research Association (MRA), is MRA’s lobbyist for the survey, opinion and marketing research profession.
VOICE OF THE COMPETITOR
By Sean Campbell and Scott Swigart

Why do so many organizations fail to listen to the voice of the competitor (VoTC)? Hubris.
And while hubris is not new, whether we are talking about Roman emperors or business leaders in the 21st century, it is clear that hubris is still an organization killer.

But what can inoculate us from this disease? Bringing the outside world in.

Bring the VoTC’s customers, the voice of their partners and the voice of their products into your own building. Make it clear that the competitor should not be ignored. Make it clear that the competitor can and should be beaten. And when they cannot, make it clear under what circumstances they are likely to win, regardless of your best efforts.

What are the steps to doing this effectively? How can you bring the VoTC into your offices, into your conference rooms, and into your corporate campus?

The three voices you will need to research, package, and disseminate within your own company are in the graphic above.

**Voice of the Customer (VoC)**

Many organizations have buckets of data on their own customers. They have so much data on their own customers that they send them Christmas and or birthday cards, mailers of every kind, and in many cases they essentially know what their own customers are going to want before they know it themselves.

But does all this data, on your own customers, lead to insight on where the market is headed? Does it help you win new customers or enter new markets?

It may. But likely (and sadly) it does not help in the majority of cases, because having a bucket of data on your own customers—even Big Data—is only half the picture you need. And a focus on only half the picture is evident in many large companies.

For example, if you were to walk into a typical meeting in a large company, you might find that much of the discussion centers on who the company’s customers “are” or “are not.” You’re also likely to find that much of the discussion keeps returning to the same customer archetypes. In addition, if you were to jump into a time machine, you might find these very same archetypes being discussed 5, 10, or even 15 or 20 years ago, perhaps in the very same conference rooms.

In addition, some companies, particularly those of long standing, turn these customer archetypes into a company creation story, one that typically goes back to the dawn of the organization. In this story, the company “gets” a certain type of customer. In fact, in this story, they are the only ones who “get” the needs of this particular customer in a particular industry.

In this type of environment, the VoTC is muted, so much so that the competitor appears incapable of meeting the needs of anyone.

But what if someone else has met the customer’s requirements, fully and completely? So completely that you weren’t even given a seat at the negotiating table?

Here are just a few classic examples of companies that failed to listen to the VoTC before it was too late.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Digital Equipment Corp.</th>
<th>PCs will never beat microcomputers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kodak</td>
<td>Digital isn’t as good as film</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sears</td>
<td>Kmarts won’t steal our customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kmart</td>
<td>Target and Walmart won’t steal our customers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compaq</td>
<td>Clone manufacturers become “good enough”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are more modern examples as well:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BestBuy</th>
<th>No one will buy a TV online (Amazon)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microsoft</td>
<td>Mobile will never beat PCs (iOS / Android)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novell</td>
<td>We can do open-source better than Red Hat, closed-source better than Microsoft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blackberry</td>
<td>The world likes a physical keyboard and always will</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

So what can help move us:

- From competitor profiles that are based on myth to those that are based on fact?
- Toward an understanding of a customer’s key buying criteria that is objective and not rooted in our own preconceptions?
- Toward a complete understanding of the “job” that the market wants done today as opposed to yesterday?

Marrying knowledge of our current customer with the VoTC.

How does an organization effectively bring the VoTC into the building? How do they make it so that they truly understand how the competitor is being successful and decide where to go head-to-head versus where to differentiate?

**Finding the Competitor’s Customers**

The first step is to find the competitor’s customers. And fortunately, that process is much easier than it was in years past.

To understand the difference, let’s first take a step back to the year 2000. We were just getting over our (misplaced fear) of Y2K. *Gladiator* was one of the most popular movies of the year, and most homes were connecting to the Internet using dial-up.

In this world, what did a typical sales and marketing process look like?

Well, for starters the (desk) phone was in use a great deal more, as were in-person visits. And a Web page wasn’t much more than an inventory of a company’s products and services, therefore the Web was a far cry from the interactive portals that we see today. Imagine replacing your cell phone video camera with this gem:

Apple’s Website – c. February 2000 – Courtesy of Archive.org

But what does this have to do with VoTC research? A great deal.

Given the fact that sales cycles, marketing cycles, hiring cycles, and much of what business does was not conducted via
the Web in the year 2000, a competitor’s customers left no meaningful digital smoke trail about who they were engaging with, buying from, or were happy to evangelize in a public (Web-based) setting.

In fact, most of the knowledge about what a customer was doing with suppliers and partners could only be identified via phone chats or in-person visits with sellers, marketers, customer service reps, friends, family and business colleagues.

In the year 2000, it could be very difficult to determine who a competitor’s customers actually were, primarily because much of this customer activity occurred within the bounds of “closed” networks. In addition, any invitation to join these networks was unlikely to be extended to a company that offered a competing solution.

It could be so difficult to find specific customers of a competitor’s that it was easier to simply say that it was impossible. Of course, you could claim to find a few of the competitor’s customers, but finding any meaningful number was simply too hard. Hence, it would be easier and more effective to research your own customers and hope for the best in terms of developing an understanding about the market.

But given that it’s 2015, you don’t have to do that anymore.

At this point many of you might be thinking:

“We only need to listen to our own customers and give them what they want. They will tell us what they need. They will tell us what we need to build in the future. And they will lead us to future success.”

If only that were true.

As many studies and books have shown, listening only to your own customers and failing to combine this knowledge with a liberal dose of the VoTC’s customers is going to create problems for you in the short-term, medium-term and long-term.

Books that have tackled this in some detail include:

Stall Points – covers in detail 17 different ways companies fail to adjust their strategies – at least 10 of which are focused on a lack of understanding of the external environment.

Innovator’s Dilemma and the Innovator’s Solution — two classic works

You can identify a large number of your competitor’s customers, their partners and influencers. You can even clearly see the messages that they are pushing to customers across various sales and marketing channels, all of which leads to bringing the VoTC into your building.

In many cases, organizations assume that each partner is a captive asset, treating partners as if they were a ‘child’ business rather than a business in their own right

a process which will keep your own sales, marketing, strategy and product development efforts more in line with the world around you.

Because it’s not 2014, let alone 2000, let’s walk through some examples of how to build out a list of the competitor’s customers.

Reverse Engineering a Customer List

Why “Reverse Engineering”? Because misappropriating a list of your competitor’s customers is likely against the law and will typically be considered unethical even if not strictly illegal.

However, it’s completely above board to look for and build out a list of your competitor’s customers from open source intelligence assets (OSINT).

What follows are just a few examples:

• You can mine LinkedIn profiles to look for instances where the competitor’s products are mentioned. In some cases, employees will list a product as a skill that they acquired on the job. This technique also works particularly well in industries that are more technical or engineering-oriented.

• Mining job postings can be fruitful. You should begin by looking for job postings that mention the competitor’s products or services. Seeing a competitor’s products in an organization’s job posting is a clear sign that the products are in use (or soon will be) by that company.

• A competitor’s own case studies can contain a treasure trove of data. You can see the types of companies they have sold to and even get a sense of what industries they have successfully worked with in the past.

• Broad-based social media mining, across Twitter and other social networks, can also uncover customers who are commenting about the competitor’s products and where they are currently in use.

The important thing to note is that none of these approaches involve mining your own customer relationship management (CRM) system for “losses.” While we don’t discount CRM-based loss data entirely, we feel an over-reliance on it can be problematic, simply because loss-based data, by itself, can’t meaningfully answer the following questions:

• Why didn’t we even have a seat at the table when the customer was making a decision?

• What customer segments are our competitors active in today that we are not?

• What verticals are our competitors active in today that we are not?

• What type of geographic is our competitors active in today that we are not?

In short, if you filter your analysis down to where you play today, you likely won’t see the full playing field that you and your competitors play on. If you lack that kind of full court visibility, you might be enhancing your competitor’s long-term chances at the expense of your own.

VoTC’s – Partners

Outside of the competitor’s customers, what other voice do we need to hear from when conducting VoTC research?

A Competitor’s Partners.

This may seem an interesting choice given these organizations are not strictly customers per se. However, the role these organizations play as an information broker is vital.

The ability of a partner network to limit or promote certain messages can make or break the fortunes of a company. This effect has been widely studied and discussed in a number of popular books such as Co-Opetition and The Wide Lens.

As Ron Adner puts it in The Wide Lens, understanding your partners is important.
because “when you rely on partners to enable your success, your success becomes vulnerable to your partners’ progress.”

But if this is so, why do companies frequently fail to research their competitor’s partner networks as well?

Why do they not ask questions like the following?

- What drives a partner to join the competitor’s partner program?
- What benefits (direct and indirect) do they receive from joining the program?
- How many of our current partners are also partners of the competitor?
- If a partner organization could only join one program (ours or theirs) which one looks better on paper and which one looks better after one year of being in the program?
- Is the competitor’s partner program growing or shrinking and where is this activity most prevalent?
- What type of role does the competitor’s partner program play in their business success (assume it may not be the same as yours)?

In many cases, organizations assume that each partner is a captive asset, treating partners as if they were a “child” business rather than a business in their own right, expecting them to be more interested in what their “parent” is doing than in the world around them.

The great majority of your partners are aware of the options they have before them, which is one of the reasons interacting with your own partners and those of the competitor can generate such solid insights. Each partner is a sensor or sorts, listening and sifting through the stream of offers and counter-offers that other potential partners (your competitors) might be able to provide.

In fact, we like to say that one partner interview is worth five customer interviews because a partner interacts with more of your own partners as partners of the competitor than any typical customer (your competitors) might be able to provide.

Unfortunately, many organizations see their partners as only receiving communication from one “channel” above themselves.

And, there is not just one reason (that 1:5 ratio), but two reasons you might talk to partners:

**Seeing Beyond the Event Horizon**

For many obvious and practical reasons, there is information about your competitor that you will never have access to on a firsthand basis. Beyond any practical, ethical and legal considerations that might leap to mind, you simply don’t work in the competitor’s building and, therefore, your knowledge of operations, investments, future plans, etc. are going to be through secondhand sources.

But, as a researcher, if you consider yourself to be first and foremost a reporter of true market conditions, you are going to want to find the most efficient pathway to the truth.

And partners provide a highway.

Your competitors are regularly “speaking” to their partners (and potentially yours) about why they are a good “buy.” Common topics of conversation include:

- The competitor’s product futures
- Current pricing models
- Future pricing models
- Expansion plans
- Competitor counter-pitches

What’s perhaps most interesting is that, as your competitor “pitches” themselves to new partners, many of the same subject areas mentioned above are covered in these conversations. Hence, your own partners may have visibility into the very questions outlined, simply because they’ve been “pitched” by the competition. But you’ll only know that if you take the time to reach out and ask.

We also offer the same advice here that we did when talking about interacting with the competitor’s customers. Don’t just interact with partners who are currently engaged with you or the competitor. Look for those partners in regions, industries or segments who have yet to commit to either of you. These more alognic players can sometimes provide a clear signal as to where the market may be headed next and what your future (and those of your competitors) might be in it.

**Identifying Partners**

Fortunately, with the right amount of effort, partners can be easily identified and then inserted into VoTC research efforts.

Some examples include:

- A company’s own partner conference.
- Many of a company’s own partners are working with organizations that they compete with, either directly or indirectly.
- That’s why it’s called Co-opetition.
- Partner portals.
- These are put up by the competition or third parties.
- In many cases, you’ll be able to quickly identify partners in your region or focus area.
- Business social networks and simple Web searches
  - Partners have their own business to lead and drive, hence they will be driving their own evangelism, marketing and sales efforts. Therefore, even simple Google searches can turn up a wide range of potential partners to talk to.
- Finding a competitor’s partners isn’t usually the hard part. Think about it – they want to be found.

What is important is to have a plan to engage these organizations from the start of the research effort, and to have the right questions in hand when the conversations start.

**In Conclusion**

History has shown that companies that understand the world they live in have the best chance of survival.

Focusing your efforts on half the puzzle (only the VoC) and ignoring the rest (the VoTC) is likely to leave you with blind spots at best and, at worst, a company that is at risk.

Don’t make that mistake.

Ensure that your own employees have a clear and unbiased view of the market and your competitors before you:

- Plan your next product launch
- Develop your next set of sales messaging
- Build out a new marketing campaign
- Develop corporate strategy

“Unless you try to do something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow.”

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Sean Campbell and Scott Swigart are the CEO and president respectively of Cascade Insights. Cascade Insights specializes in competitive intelligence and market research services for B2B technology companies. To learn more about Cascade Insights, visit www.cascadeinsights.com.
OPTIMIZING QUALITATIVE DESIGN...

BY ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

By Katrina Noelle and Janet Standen
As researchers, it’s our job to ask questions. That job should not be limited to the conversations we have with our platform providers, recruiters and respondents. We need to start asking questions upfront of our clients that will help us design optimal research projects that produce the best insights.

Bids, Quotes and RFPs
How many times have you received an email asking if you’re free on April 1st for three focus groups? Or an RFP asking for a quote on 20 IDIs? New projects are exciting and we want to jump in and say “yes,” but the most important thing is to start a dialogue with the potential research buyer to truly understand their needs (and limitations) so that you can design the best possible project to meet their specific situation. Take a step back and ask for a meeting that will allow you to fully understand the project background and objectives. That way, you will be more likely to propose the ideal methodology.

A pre-design conversation will allow you to:
- Understand the broader business decision the research will inform
- Explore the client’s limitations and expectations
- Design a research approach to meet the client’s core research objective
- Prepare for reporting deliverables
- Choose wisely from the ever-growing array of qualitative methodology options
- Understand if a hybrid approach would serve the project

Don’t keep silent. Both research provider and buyer have shared goals—to unearth the best possible insights and to deliver the best possible results. It’s important to establish mutual respect and a clear understanding from each other’s perspectives. Don’t be afraid to ask about important elements such as a context, timing, budget, audience, target market and client team involvement so that you can efficiently and effectively design the optimum research to meet your client’s needs.

Garbage in, garbage out. We use this adage when it comes to the importance of an excellent participant screener. It should also be applied when designing research methodologies and strategies. Researchers need to know the full story—the rationale behind the research and the intended use of the insights to be able to design research optimally.

Questions to ask your researcher buyer:
What...
- is the business decision the research will inform?
- is the core research objective?
- are the “additional” objectives?
- is the budget?
- is the stimulus material?
- are the deliverables?
- prior learning is there on this topic?
- are the methodologies that you may or may not be open to?

When...
- can the research take place?
- will stimulus be available?
- are interim and/or full results needed?

Who...
- is the target market?
- on the team needs to be involved and at what level?
- will the learning be shared with and how will it be shared?

Where...
- is the client?
- is the target market?
- does the research and/or debrief need to take place?

Be Prepared
As qualitative consultants, it’s our job to come to the table with well-researched recommendations that we can stand behind. Consider adding the rationale behind your methodology recommendations to the bid itself (or in the cover email) so that the client has a clear understanding of your thought process. Once you start asking questions, clients may want to ask you a few of their own! Some answers you might want to have ready:

How...
- many participants do you recommend?
- to best reach these targets?
- much time is needed to cover the objectives?
- might a hybrid qual approach help?
- might a qual-quant approach help?
- should discrete targets be handled?
- many phases?
- should it be handled — asynchronously or synchronously?
- can we maximize the impact of the budget?
- can the learning be best shared?

Who...
- are the best recruiters for these key targets?
- should the participants be — “fresh” recruits / panel recruits / client database?
- will be in the backroom?

Where...
- do you recommend the research takes place — in-person/online/mobile/social media?
- are the targets best reached?

What...
- tools/platforms/techniques do you recommend and why?
- do you think are the strengths of different methods?
- is your experience with different methods?
- should the length of interaction be — one hour or even one year?
- interactivity with the stimuli would you recommend?
- homework/post-work will help?

Involve Suppliers
If you include online and/or mobile research into your design, you’ll want to start asking questions of your potential suppliers as well. This will ensure that you can answer your client’s questions and choose the optimal tools to make the project a success. By asking questions like these, you’ll have the answers you need to pick the best tool for the job. You also start to bring them in as partners in the design process, setting it up so that you can work together to bring your research vision to life on their platform.

- Can you give my end client a demo of the platform?
- What are the white label options available to my client?
- What level(s) of customer service do you offer?
- What are your recommended instructions for each activity type?
- How do we ensure participants answer questions fully, completely and in your desired order?
- How can you make activities “private” vs. “public”, i.e. shared?
- How can you contact participants (via probes and/or email)?
- What do the exports/deliverables look like?

Design Your Next Qualitative Project by Asking Questions
Open up the dialogue, start your proposal process with questions and reap the rewards of better-designed projects that meet both you and your client’s goals, better designed for richer, deeper, more actionable insights.

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The Surprising Wildcards in the FTC’s New Social Media Marketing Guidelines

By Rion Martin

Note from the editor: While our focus continues to be on marketing research, Alert!’s editorial staff recognizes the value in occasionally including content specific to other areas of an organization (e.g., branding, marketing) that typically have a tie to or involvement with marketing research departments and or processes. While these FTC’s guidelines are limited to marketing, i.e., exclude marketing research, it might be worth understanding what the implications are for social media marketing, to further your own education or that of someone in your organization.
The Federal Trade Commission (FTC)’s guidelines for making disclosures in digital advertising have been around now for 15 years; however, recent updates have major implications for social media marketing.

These new guidelines, which seek to clarify what constitutes appropriate practices for sponsored content, signal the end of the wild west, “anything goes” days of influencer marketing on social media and likely set the stage for FTC action against offending parties.

Many of the guidelines clarify situations that should be obvious: being limited to 140 characters isn’t an excuse for non-disclosure; sponsored celebrity posts on social must explicitly state that they are sponsored; bloggers must disclose if they received anything of value for the post; disclosures in video content must come at the beginning; and reviews must note if there was any sort of incentive.

However, outside of these more obvious guidelines, there were some more subtle wildcard tossed in by the FTC.

**Purchasing fake likes and followers is considered deceptive advertising**

Shortly after Newt Gingrich referenced his 1.3 million followers as a signal of strong support for his presidential bid, several data analysts crunched the numbers and found that between 80–92 percent of his followers were likely fake.

However, Mr. Gingrich isn’t the only one who has been caught trying to inflate an image with fictitious fans. Major brands, celebrities and other politicians have all been caught doing the same.

The new FTC guidelines declare that the agency sees the practice of buying and selling likes as a clearly deceptive practice that provides false information to consumers about the reputation, quality and or popularity of the company. The FTC goes on to say that “...both the purchaser and the seller of the fake ‘likes’ could face enforcement action.”

**Images alone, even if not intended to be promotional, can be considered endorsements**

When Taylor Swift appears in a print ad for Diet Coke, it is clear that she is a paid spokeswoman for the product. However, according to the FTC, that relationship would be less obvious and require disclosure if the pop star posted a picture of herself enjoying a Diet Coke to her personal Instagram feed.

This guideline might raise eyebrows for possibly going too far. Yet, whether marketers agree or disagree, the FTC has now laid out clear guidelines that require disclosure of a paid relationship, even for images that may not be intended as promotional.

As the FTC outlines, “Simply posting a picture of a product in social media, such as on Pinterest, or a video of you using it could convey that you like and approve of the product. If it does, it’s an endorsement.”

The guidelines go on to state, “If your audience thinks that what you say or otherwise communicate about a product reflects your opinions or beliefs about the product, and you have a relationship with the company marketing the product, it’s an endorsement subject to the FTC Act.”

Translation: If someone is being paid to endorse a product and they post an image or a video that could in any way be perceived as approval of said product (or company), then the nature of that relationship must be disclosed.

**Trading contest / sweepstakes entries for endorsements requires disclosure**

Prior to this latest update, the FTC actually took action against Cole Haan for running a contest that the agency felt created incentivized endorsers. The contest only required entrants to create Pinterest boards showcasing Cole Haan products, but to also include “#WanderingSole” in the description.

How was this deceptive? The FTC believed that “…participants’ pins featuring Cole Haan products were endorsements of the Cole Haan products, and the fact that the pins were incentivized by the opportunity to win a $1,000 shopping spree would not reasonably be expected by consumers who saw the pins.”

Yet, in accordance with the recent FTC guidelines, had Cole Haan simply “[made] the word ‘contest’ or ‘sweepstakes’ part of the hashtag,” it would have provided the information necessary to alert third parties that the Pinterest boards they were viewing were incentivized endorsements.

In essence, #WanderingSole was unacceptable, but #WanderingSoleContest would have saved Cole Haan a lot of trouble.

**Staying within the lines of FTC guidelines**

Above all, the latest FTC guidelines seek to define what deceptive advertising means when it comes to digital media and what must be disclosed in order to avoid running afoul of the regulations…which happens to be nearly everything.

For brands, the responsibility to ensure that all of the brand’s social arms are within FTC regulations falls on the shoulders of the companies themselves. As the FTC notes, “delegating part of your promotional program to an outside entity doesn’t relieve you of responsibility under the FTC.”

It’s important for brands to know that, even if a marketing or public relations agency is doing the brunt of the social media posting, any failure to uphold FTC regulations will ultimately be the responsibility of the organizations themselves.

As far as agency work goes, these new guidelines can be both a threat and an opportunity. If not upheld, these regulations have the potential to damage a marketing or PR firm’s reputation. However, for agencies that live up to the FTC’s expectations, it can help to foster a more transparent company-customer relationship.

With the exception of the few wildcardst detailed above, most of what the FTC put forth is fairly straightforward. Fundamentally, the rule seems to be that if there could be any question regarding whether the majority, or minority, of those that come in contact with the content fully understand that a relationship of mutual benefit exists between endorser and the product, then it must be disclosed.

Simply put, when in doubt, call it out.

**Rion Martin** is the marketing director of Infegy, provider of social media intelligence technology for marketing and research professionals. He is responsible for developing and leading Infegy’s global marketing program to boost brand awareness and market share, working closely with ad agencies, market researchers, and consumer insight teams. He also curates the Infegy blog and manages all content marketing initiatives.
The editorial staff hopes you enjoy this fun submission on Big Data & Retailers. It’s not an advertisement, but a real "live" infographic!

Big data is being generated by everything around us at all times. Every digital process and social media exchange produces it. Systems, sensors and mobile devices transmit it.
WHAT IS BIG DATA?

Big data is a collection of data from traditional and digital sources inside and outside a company that represents a source for ongoing discovery and analysis.

The ability to harness the ever-expanding amounts of data is completely transforming our ability to understand the world and everything within it.

Supermarkets are combining their loyalty card data with social media information to detect and leverage changing buying patterns.

A 2012 Gartner report predicts that data will grow 800 percent over the next five years and 80 percent of the data will be unstructured.

THE 4 V'S OF BIG DATA

In the world of ‘Big Data’ there are 4 Vs that characterize big data:

**Volume**
- The vast amounts of data generated every second.

**Velocity**
- The speed at which new data is generated and moves around (credit card fraud detection is a good example where millions of transactions are checked for unusual patterns in almost real time).

**Variety**
- The increasingly different types of data (from financial data to social media feeds, from photos to sensor data, from video capture to voice recordings).

**Veracity**
- The messiness of the data (just think of Twitter posts with hashtags, abbreviations, typos and colloquial speech).
RETAIL & BIG DATA FACTS

- **Walmart**: Walmart was one of the exceptions - it drastically reduced inventory based on the insights derived from their analytics efforts and passed on the financial gains to the consumer by way of additional savings or cost reduction on goods.

- **Amazon.com**: With the advent of the 21st century behemoths like Amazon started leveraging “recommendation engines” to suggest additional purchase items to consumers - based on their previous purchase patterns. Amazon took advantage of real-time analytics to offer on-the-spot savings for specific purchase items.

- **Target**: In 2002, Target famously (or infamously) used an algorithm to detect when women were pregnant by tracking purchases of items such as unscented lotions—and offered special discounts and coupons to those valuable patrons.

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ANALYTICS IS KEY: BENEFITS OF BIG DATA TO CONSUMERS & RETAILERS
<table>
<thead>
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| **TRANSACTIONS**
Guessing preferences | **RELATIONSHIPS**
Predicting purchase intent |

**Consumers**

1. **Better communication** that fits their needs.
2. **Save Time.**
3. **Get less junk mail.**

**Customers care about customer experience:** Getting timely and relevant offers and deals does add value, that’s why so many customers liked Amazon suggesting books that fit their taste.

**Retailers**

1. **Customer Acquisition & Retention.**
2. **Improve Existing Products.**
3. **Big data can grow eCommerce site customization exponentially.**

**Passive “micro-categories”** are now available through big data. Possibilities for some retailers are endless to help customers make a buying decision.

*Innovated by the “micro-genre” of the online video service Netflix.*

**Computer-based recognition networks** are becoming a reality.

**Predictive marketing** can help boost future conversion rates with devices such as Google Glass.

**Use big data from other professions** in the retail industry. For example, predicting product volumes for future seasons by using weather-related big data.
6 FAMOUS QUOTES ON BIG DATA

In 1957, the editor in charge of business books for Prentice Hall famously said:
“I have travelled the length and breadth of this country and talked with the best people, and I can assure you that data processing is afad that won’t last out the year.”

“Big Data is like teenage sex: everyone talks about it, nobody really knows how to do it, everyone thinks everyone else is doing it, so everyone claims they are doing it.”
Dan Ariely
Behavioural Economist

“Big data is at the foundation of all of the megatrends that are happening today, from social to mobile to the cloud to gaming.”
Chris Lynch
ex-Veritas CEO

“Information is the oil of the 21st century, and analytics is the combustion engine.”
Peter Sondergaard
of the Gartner Group

“You can have data without information, but you cannot have information without data.”
Daniel Keys Moran
a technologist and realist

“Data is the new science. Big Data holds the answers.”
Pat Geislinger
COO of EMC

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Profitability Crisis: Flailing Consumer Confidence a Key Factor in Revenue Loss

4 Sure-Fire Strategies for Cultivating Consumer Credibility Trust
By Brian Greenberg

There’s been much researched and reported about why businesses don’t turn a profit, some chronically operating “in the red” month after month until failure finally ensues. In fact, reports reveal that a staggering 50 percent of new small businesses fail in just the first year, and only one-third survive 10 years or more.

While the litany of business failure postmortems (for both small businesses and large conglomerates) have asserted viable collective reasoning for said profitability pitfalls and outright failures, including money mismanagement, operational inefficiencies, poor needs analysis and price planning and being out-competed among them, not enough have focused on the all-mighty consumer credibility and trust factor when analyzing a business boom or bust.

And no industry is more vulnerable to flailing credibility and trust among consumers than retail. For its part, the retail trade crisis has been well-established, particularly with respect to dwindling foot traffic to brick-and-mortar stores. Even online, it’s shocking to learn that fully 97 percent of visitors to eCommerce sites bail out without purchasing on their first visit. Clearly, there’s a severe disconnect between vendors and the marketplaces they hope to serve—a situation resulting in some serious economic opportunity lost. These disparities are also among the biggest misperceptions that both online and offline marketers hold.

Far too many companies are churning out traditional sales lingo laced with fluff and vague, or entirely over-inflated, claims while spending paltry time and energy establishing credibility with prospective customers. And the mission critical nature of credibility cannot be overstated as it establishes a company or brand’s integrity, reliability, validity, soundness and a host of other image-including indicators of an entity’s moral and ethical code—standards by which it operates. At the most fundamental level, credibility translates into trust and trust translates into sales.

Today’s consumer is quite savvy, but often overloaded, over-committed, overdue for a vacation and, thus, easily annoyed. From telemarketer calls coming in at dinnertime (or, worse, before the alarm sounds in the morning), an endless stream of SPAM emails jamming inboxes, overflowing white mail that proceeds directly to the recycle bin, statistics show that consumers can be bombarded with more than 300,000 messages every day. Overwhelming demand for consumer attention and dollars has created a market filled with cynics whose defenses are on full alert.

Below are four proven tactics I’ve learned on the sales and marketing front line which are critical to building a loyal client base and ultimately boosting revenue:

1. Righteous Reviews
Studies show that, in general, people like to do what others are doing, especially in situations where they feel insecure. That fact can be emphasized by another fairly understandable statistic: Customers are more likely to make a purchase from an entity that can produce favorable reviews about their product, service or company. In fact, according to a new survey conducted by Dimensional Research, an overwhelming 90 percent of respondents who recalled reading online reviews claimed that positive online reviews influenced buying decisions, while 86 percent said buying decisions were influenced by negative online reviews.

This can best be accomplished by deciphering what stage of the buying cycle the visitor is in and then publishing or offering real and applicable reviews and testimonials that allow potential buyers to align themselves with others who have made purchase decisions. And, given the different stages of the buying process, it’s essential to showcase reviews and testimonials that touch on more than one aspect of a previous buyer’s experience. Prospects want to know that the person who wrote the review really exists so be sure to list real names (with permission of course). And, if you sell to other businesses, also list job titles and the companies they represent. It’s also advisable for marketers and business owners to take proactive steps to encourage buyers to provide written reviews, whether through a dedicated Web page, a follow-up email or phone call or a reminder next time they stop by to shop with you.

2. The Science of Social Proof
Simply put, social proof is influence created when one discovers that others are doing something. While reviews and testimonials
are two of the most persuasive forms of social proof (as detailed above), there are other important considerations. We now know that—with the rise of Internet sales and social media—potential buyers can amass a great deal of information even before visiting a store and certainly before making a purchase. Endorsements from organizations or celebrities with a positive public image and the “wisdom of the crowds” can definitely provide the emotional risk relief needed to close a sale.

Social media also presents tremendous image opportunity. For example, Facebook is considered the “most effective” of the social media sites. “Likes” on Facebook are positive reviews about your products or services and ultimately show potential users that your brand can be trusted. Another highly effective brand-builder is publicity. Being mentioned in the media is extraordinarily effective because having your brand or company featured, or offering

expert “thought leader” commentary, is essentially an implied endorsement from the media outlet in which it runs. Of course, it’s imperative to leverage these public relations “wins” in your sales, marketing and business development efforts.

3. Transparency Translates
The word “sales” has become synonymous with “hype.” Modern consumerism is now based on transparency. This asks that we operate with openness, clear communication and accountability. A marketer that truly cares about the

prospect’s perceptions and experience will have nothing to hide. Ensure marketing-speak has no hidden agendas or false promises and that all who come in contact with your business gain a sense of—or have unencumbered access to—the company’s mission, vision, philosophies, environment, culture and core.

Potential customers consistently rank customer service as the number one factor impacting trust. And, understanding that things sometimes go awry in business, I’ve found that people admire companies more when they readily admit to a mistake and address the issue directly. For me, personally, the best way to adhere to full and complete transparency in business is to be mindful that businesses have a responsibility to foster clear, open and meaningful exchanges with both prospects and established customers on any subject they want to explore. It’s definitely a

Consumers need an advocate. Amid all of the marketplace ‘noise,’ there is an incredibly opportunity right now for customer-centric brands to cut through the clutter

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winning path to a lucrative end, but transparency has to also be an “end” in and of itself.

4. Take Direction from your Customers
No matter what business you’re in, your most precious asset is your existing customer base. Why not intensely focus on their behavior and commentary (whether solicited or not) as you do business with them? Ask for honest feedback and motivate them to provide it. It’s the only way to gain a deeper insight into their thinking, how they feel about your business, product or approach, and what you can do to make their experience better. Such feedback can come from informal discussions or “interviews” or surveys and polls that provide anonymity and can make subjects more comfortable to express their real thoughts and feelings.

What does your expressed desire to listen to your customers say about a company or brand? It tells them that it cares; that it’s serious about satisfying them; that it wants to succeed; and, most importantly, that you’re open to change. In this same vein, listening to employees can provide great value as well. They are on the front line, after all. Ask them what they are hearing, what they feel is going well, and what is not working at all.

Being a credibility-conscious sales operation does not take a large budget. It largely involves not telling people what they want but rather listening to, and otherwise availing, what they need. Provide valuable information and uncontested access to it; offer a product or service whereby the care and quality is evident; rally existing customers, partners and other constituents to get on your bandwagon through testimonials, social media and the like; and consistently demonstrate top-notch service over a sustained period of time. If you work at these, your reputation alone may be enough to spur that coveted sales growth.

Brian Greenberg serves as a founder and executive of multiple online businesses, including as President of True Blue Life Insurance. He is in the world’s top one percent of life insurance and financial services professionals. He may be reached online at www.TrueBlueLifeInsurance.com.

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How the Emergence of Dashboard Sampling Is Impacting Quarantine Periods

By Mike Misel

The growth in push-suppliers in the marketing research industry has been exponential, especially in the U.S. market, and will continue to grow and become a real force in the sample supply chain. This has been further consolidated by the emergence of dashboard solutions and advanced application programming interface (API) technology to make the most of this movement. Push-supply will continue to provide an important sample source at a time where supply is a major consideration and when distractions for consumers – turning their heads from movement. Push-supply will continue to provide an important sample source at a time where supply isn’t infinite, additional sources from push-suppliers certainly cannot be ruled out and will only grow further.

Those concerned about quality can take the blending route. This is a great solution to employ in any case where researchers are after more accurate results with less bias or skew (which can sometimes occur from using one panel even when multiple survey-taking isn’t an issue). Respondents in any one panel will share common ground, so pulling together and blending differences sources can provide a more widely-representative opinion.

Upholding these quarantine periods is becoming more challenging as the chain has become more convoluted, resulting in respondents being able to take part in as many surveys as they like at a frequency of their choosing.

In the modern sampling world, we have a new respondent experience concern that didn’t exist when the idea of quarantine periods was conceptualized: device-friendly studies. Today, most people are checking emails on their smartphone, and a 28-minute grid study creates an awful experience on mobile devices. So, dashboard sampling alleviates this by presenting opportunities when people are in a situation where they are looking to be monetized. They are, in a real sense, opting in and doing so in real-time.

There is concern in the industry about what this means for survey quality; does it open the doors for professional survey takers, where gain of incentives is the main objective (and incentives are, of course, important to keep consumers engaged)? Generally, a researcher may not be aware of the data gathering process and therefore not know about the potential for their insights to be based on opinions of people who take surveys very regularly. How can this be addressed in a modern-day marketplace?

Some may argue that quarantine periods should be removed altogether because there is no real way of policing them. It’s difficult to state a right or wrong in the case of push-supply and potential overuse of respondents because it will be of greater concern to some in the industry than others, depending on the type of insights needed or the project being worked on. But in a world where supply isn’t infinite, additional sources from push-suppliers certainly cannot be ruled out and will only grow further.

In addition, the growing reliance on what can be termed as “non-traditional” sample sources comes at a time when there is heightened scrutiny on the quality of online samples. This scrutiny was recently highlighted by various papers presented at events hosted by the likes of the Market Research Society (MRS) and ESOMAR. Reg Baker, executive director of the Marketing Research Institute International (MRIA) and other industry leaders have called on the industry to revisit sampling practices and to raise awareness about the importance of ensuring that the fundamentals and science behind sampling, and setting sample-frames, remains high priority and central to all suppliers and their clients.

Here are five tips to consider around using non-traditional sample sources:

1. Know the source. Expect transparency about the sources you use in terms of how the respondents are recruited and where from.
2. Understand the incentive model.
3. Understand the respondent flow from the supply source origin to the survey and also whether there is routing or other techniques applied prior to a respondent reaching your survey.
4. Inquire as to the profiling and targeting capabilities of the supply sources you are using. For example, can the same respondent be contacted in the future should you need to?
5. Appreciate the potential biases which exist with any source or methodology of sample and account for those in your sample-frame designs.

Mike Misel is vice president of Cint North America Sales. He has spent the last five years as a sampling consultant for both tech companies and full service marketing research firms, solidifying strategic partnerships by realizing efficiencies.

An earlier version of this article was previously published at greenbookblog.org/2015/07/07/how-the-emergence-of-dashboard-sampling-is-impactings-quarantine-periods.
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To learn more about the Professional Researcher Certification (PRC) visit www.marketingresearch.org/certification.
Improving the Survey Experience for Mobile Respondents
By Ted Saunders

There are more people in the world with mobile phones than there are with toothbrushes. Smartphone penetration in many developed countries is at or above 70 percent. The rapid adoption of mobile technologies has impacted everyday life in many ways and is changing the way businesses communicate with their customers. The CX industry is no exception, and the way businesses capture experience feedback must evolve.

Analysis of MaritzCX survey data from 2011–2015 shows that respondents are increasingly using mobile devices to access Web surveys. Thirty-eight percent of all survey “starts” were on mobile devices in the first quarter of 2015, with 30 percent on mobile phones and 8 percent on tablets. We anticipate that more than half of all customer experience (CX) surveys will be started on mobile devices by the end of calendar year 2015.

While most surveys can be opened and viewed on mobile devices, the vast majority will not work well for the respondent:

- Respondents who try to complete a traditionally-designed, non-optimized Web survey are often presented with small text that is not easily readable without zooming in to increase the font size.
- Some platforms present the question or answer text outside of the initial horizontal screen display on small screen devices.
- Navigation issues may also be present when the “next” button is not prominently displayed on a small screen.
- Mobile respondents may have difficulty understanding how to activate or respond to certain question types such as dropdown lists or ranking questions.
- Some question types display differently depending on the browser a respondent is using.

All of these issues have an impact on respondents. If researchers are lucky, a poorly displayed survey will only result in fatigue and frustration for the respondent who is willing to put in extra effort to provide feedback. A more typical response, however, is that respondents put less effort into the survey process, either abandoning surveys or selecting the answer options that are easiest for them to register.

From a sampling perspective, a survey that is not designed for mobile users is likely to under-represent the heavy mobile user demographic, which typically tends to be younger audiences and lower income populations. Younger audiences in the 18–25 age range are known to have the lowest response rates of any demographic for most traditional data collection methodologies (mail, phone and desktop-centric Web surveys), but they are willing to provide feedback on studies that are easy to complete on their mobile devices.

**There are long surveys with high completion rates and short surveys with low completion rates. It all comes down to the respondent’s interest in the survey topic and the overall survey design**

**Best Practices for Mobile Survey Design**
Businesses that want to improve the survey experience for a growing mobile audience ought to consider three key areas when designing surveys for mobile devices:

- Programming standards
- Question presentation
- Survey length

**Programming Standards**
Web programming standards should start with an adaptive design (e.g., device type is identified at the time the survey link is clicked with respondents instantaneously directed to either a mobile or non-mobile template). For example, designing mobile templates that are responsive, i.e., style sheets that are applied will stretch text to fit the dimensions of the mobile screen with the largest font possible. This device-agnostic approach uses one template to cover all mobile devices rather than individual templates for all 8,000+ mobile devices on the market.

Additionally, this design focuses on an initial text display that does not extend beyond the horizontal boundaries, but does allow for vertical scrolling because testing has determined that respondents do not have navigation issues with vertical scrolling. Respondent fatigue (measured through abandon rates) is higher on surveys that require right to left, back-and-forth scrolling.

Many surveys use graphics and the treatment of brand images used in the survey background to tie in the survey experience with the overall brand experience. While this approach works well in the non-mobile environment for which it was originally designed, consumer testing indicates that standard images take much longer to load on mobile devices, leading to higher abandon rates.

Research also reveals that text and logo alignment are often altered on smaller screens, sometimes displaying question text over a dark logo, making it difficult for a respondent to read. To overcome these issues, it is possible to leverage enhanced mobile-optimized images that allow the same logo to be displayed more crisply on a smaller screen and to be sized appropriately so that it does not contrast with the question text and with less weight than a standard image so page load time is not affected.

**Question Presentation**
Even after mobile programming standards are applied, some text-heavy questions may not format ideally on smaller screens. There may also be problems with the way mobile browsers display questions designed for desktop environments.

Multi-attribute grids are a good example of a common question presentation issue tied to screen size. In most grids, attribute text is displayed in the same row as the radio button answer choices, resulting in either a very small font or a wrap-around effect that creates too much space between the response lines. Most grids also display scale labels only once, above the top scale on the grid. Although this presentation works fine on large screens where the entire grid can be viewed once, it presents problems for mobile respondents who scroll down the grid and lose sight of the scale’s labels.

A better way to present grids to mobile respondents is to move the attribute text above each scale measure (creating more space versus having everything on the same
line) and placing the scale labels inside each response option so that the respondent is always able to see response options regardless of how far down the page he or she scrolls.

It’s impossible to provide guidance on every question type because there are an unlimited number of ways questions can be presented. That said, we recommend testing all questions on common mobile devices/browsers prior to releasing to the field. This “mobile first” design and testing philosophy is described later in the article.

Survey Length

Some might think that after best practices for programming and question presentation have been applied, mobile survey completion percentages would be the same as non-mobile completion percentages. While that is the goal, it rarely happens for two reasons:

1. Mobile phones typically have lower bandwidths than non-mobile devices and location can impact the page load speeds (both the strength of signal to the phone and the amount of traffic on the carrier network).

2. Mobile respondents, by virtue of being mobile, are able to access a survey anywhere. They could be taking the survey on the train, while waiting for their children after school or during a work break. Because they are often outside of a controlled environment, there are many distractions that can pull them away from the survey.

Many people in the research industry have set limits on how long surveys can be (e.g., no more than X minutes or Y questions) when there is the possibility of a mobile audience, but analysis shows that respondents’ tolerance for survey length varies greatly from topic to topic and is driven by their relationship with the brand commissioning the research as well as their interest in the survey topic. To set a limit of 5 minutes on all surveys because a sharp increase in abandon rates was measured at that mark could take away 10 minutes of valuable feedback from luxury car purchasers who really want to share what they like and dislike about the features on their new sports car. There are long surveys with high completion rates and short surveys with low completion rates. It all comes down to the respondent’s interest in the survey topic and the overall survey design.

What can be done to ward off the distraction factor? It will always be present, but there is a newer technique that helps increase mobile completion rates without surgical removal of questions. Known as “survey chunking,” this technique breaks surveys into pieces. The ideal case is a survey where there is evidence that length is limiting participation from mobile respondents, either because the survey length in the invitation is discouraging or, for respondents who have started the survey, distraction factors are keeping respondents from finishing. The critical question battery is displayed to all respondents while the secondary batteries are rotated and only shown to a portion of the mobile population.

Mobile-first means that surveys are first developed and tested on mobile phones with the understanding that if the survey works well on mobile phones, it will also display well on larger screens

For example, assume a nine-minute survey can be broken into three “chunks.” All respondents see chunk A (which would include the questions that are most important to the research team), but only half of the respondents see chunk B. The half not exposed to battery B are given chunk C instead. In theory, this approach would cut the average mobile survey length down from nine minutes to six minutes, and assuming more respondents are now completing the shorter survey, would give a higher level of confidence in the critical battery. It is important to have some mobile representation on the secondary batteries, as mobile respondents tend to have different behaviors and opinions than non-mobile respondents. While it may seem easiest to only provide the primary battery, some measure of the other batteries from the unique mobile audience should be measured.

Mobile First Design Philosophy

Much of the guidance on design thus far addresses techniques to improve the display of surveys designed for big browser devices (desktops, laptops, etc.) for mobile devices, but it is important to note that not every question can easily be transitioned to a mobile design. When questions cannot be altered or removed from the survey, mobile respondents should be notified that the survey is not compatible with their device and best taken on a larger screen. This is not an ideal option, as many willing respondents will not take the time to find another device, but it is better than presenting the respondent with a request that he or she cannot complete.

To minimize these occurrences, adopt a mobile-first design philosophy on new projects. Mobile-first means that surveys are first developed and tested on mobile phones with the understanding that if the survey works well on mobile phones, it will also display well on larger screens.

It can be challenging for companies to understand how to best communicate with their customers and offer them the services they need, but, for those who are able to continually refine their strategy and optimize the survey experience for mobile users, the rewards are great.

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General Mobile Survey Design Best Practices

Vertical Scrolling: Respondents can deal with vertical scrolling; horizontal scrolling leads to fatigue, higher abandon rates and data quality issues.

Consistent Presentation: Do not alter scale presentation from one device to another (a horizontal display on non-mobile and a vertical display on mobile, for example). Changes in scale presentation will often result in score differences between device types.

Light on Images: Heavy images will cause page-load delays on some mobile devices. When background images are required, they should be mobile-optimized.

Short Scales: All else being equal, shorter scales will provide a better respondent experience (larger font and easier for respondent to choose desired response).

Open-ended Questions: It is more difficult for respondents to type verbatim responses on mobile phones. New mobile technologies that allow respondents to provide feedback without relying on a small keyboard should improve the quantity and quality of open-ended responses.

Simple Design: Most “engaging” survey designs like drag and drops and slider scales lead to higher abandon rates and data comparability issues. Respondents like exercises that they are familiar with and that they can complete quickly. In most cases, that is a traditional question display.
“WE HAVE RECEIVED MORE HIGH-QUALITY LEADS SINCE WE BEGAN WORKING TOGETHER THAN IN THE ENTIRE FIVE YEARS VERAQUEST HAS BEEN AROUND.

I would urge anyone who’s even thinking about working with a lead-generating team to give Bridgemark’s Larry Brown a call.”

— Peter Gold, CEO, VeraQuest

Bridgemark Solutions provides lead generation and sales support solutions, specializing in the unique needs of the market research industry. We help our clients make in-roads with new sales prospects faster, more effectively, and with less expense. Our clients realize that it's a much better use of their time and resources to focus on new business presentations, follow-up, proposal development, closing sales and expanding their client base than identifying sales contacts and generating new sales leads.

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The first and most important step to successfully launching a product or service is to choose the market(s) that are right for your business. Too many companies fail to do their due diligence regarding pre-market entry and then pay the price in poor sales and unforeseen complications and costs. Euromonitor International has developed a four pillar model to bring methodological clarity to selecting new emerging markets.

Market
The first pillar, market, is perhaps the most fundamental. It incorporates macroeconomic stability, the middle class, the consumer market size and growth, and openness. These elements are essential concerns of any emerging market strategy. Is the country sizeable and stable enough to do business in? Are consumers well-off enough to buy products and services? Are the potential growth rates of the market attractive enough to offset any risk? And are the conditions for foreign businesses right?

Macroeconomic Stability
A fundamental issue is one of macroeconomic stability. It isn’t impossible to succeed in unstable economies, but it is much more challenging and a company’s appetite for risk must be substantial. Many factors can and should be considered, ranging from economic growth and price pressures to external and internal imbalances. Consistent growth with numerous drivers, underpinned by sound fiscal and monetary policies is the ideal. For example, a country which runs a persistent current account deficit financed largely on easily reversible portfolio inflows, such as Turkey, is at risk because these funds can be easily withdrawn if sentiment changes. An economy with strong growth based on a single factor, such as commodities, or highly reliant on a single trade partner is also at more risk than one with broadly-based growth.

The Middle Class
A large and vibrant middle class is often the chief target for many multinationals because a middle class income is an indicator of sufficient spending power to consume non-essential goods. In emerging markets, some of those entering the middle class will have the ability to spend on non-essentials for the first time, creating significant opportunities for consumer goods companies. Gaining first-mover advantage in emerging markets and building a loyal consumer base can therefore be a winning long-term strategy. But what constitutes a middle class income varies dramatically even within a region. For example, in 2013, a middle income household in Bolivia earned just over $4,000 compared to $10,000 in Peru and $20,000 in Uruguay. Spending priorities also vary dramatically by tastes, motivations and aspirations as well as different budgets. Developing a thorough understanding of the middle class is therefore essential.

Consumer Market Size and Growth
The size and scale of the consumer market are both crucial and sometimes can understandably be seen as the only (or major) deciding factor. It is clear that a stable and sound economy with a vibrant middle class is important but very low total consumer expenditure could make an otherwise attractive market too small to be a priority. For example, Turkmenistan has seen rates of economic growth average 11 percent over the past five years... compared to 9 percent in China. In 2013, 67.7 percent of households had a disposable income over $10,000 – a real terms increase of 315 percent since 2005. However, with total consumer expenditure of $16.7 billion in 2013, Turkmenistan remains just one-tenth the market size of the city of Melbourne in Australia.

Openness
A lack of openness to trade and foreign direct investment can be a hurdle too far. The most open large-ish emerging markets in terms of their trade to GDP ratios include Vietnam, Malaysia and the UAE. More difficult to quantify, but equally important, is the receptiveness of the population to new products and services, new brands, new tastes, new flavors, new designs and styles and new ways of thinking — in short, openness to new ideas. Euromonitor International’s 2013 Global Consumer Trends Survey shows that, in the BRIC markets, Indian consumers are most likely to describe themselves as liking to try new products and services. Conversely, only 8.9 percent of Russians would describe themselves thus.

Population
Many of the most important decisions that planners must make should be shaped by demographic realities on the ground. Understanding and being able to harness population trends enables new market entrants to maximize their profitability by targeting the right people in the right place at the right time. Marketers and strategic planners should be posing questions such as:

• Where do my target consumers live?
• Where will they live in the future?
• Which age segment offers the most opportunities?
• What are the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead?
• Is my target audience growing and will it continue to do so?
• Is it geographically dispersed or concentrated?

Size and Growth
In terms of scale, 42.5 percent of the emerging and developing market population lives in just two countries: China and India. Looking at growth, 21 of the 172 emerging and developing countries which Euromonitor tracks are expected to have a smaller population in 2030 than today with Ukraine seeing the largest...
absolute fall of 3.1 million inhabitants (these figures do not take into account the loss of Crimea). On the other hand, India is set to add a further 247 million people, accounting for 21 percent of the population growth in emerging and developing markets as a whole. To operate successfully in a market where the consumer base is in decline requires a different strategy than one where growth is fast. However, growth is not everything — quality counts, too.

**Age Structure**

Expanding on our Indian example, where will the 247 million people come from? Between 2014 and 2030, the largest increase in population will be amongst those aged 35–69 (accounting for almost three quarters of population growth). During this same period, the population aged less than 9 years will actually decline. So the demographics underlying the market for baby care products are much less favorable than for those offering products aimed at middle-aged adults. Another example can be found in Poland where the overall population is in decline, but the population aged 40–54 is actually increasing. This segment is a key one in Poland because it is also the one with the highest average gross income. At $14,766 in 2013, this segment earned 15 percent more than the average income of those aged 15 or older.

**Vital Statistics**

Vital statistics (incorporating fertility, birth and death rates, as well as migration and life expectancy) are key to understanding what is driving overall changes in the population. This matters because growth driven by migration leads to a different demographic make-up than growth driven by natural increase. Migration tends to swell the working age population, rather than children or the elderly. It can also have an impact on the ethnic mix of the country and lead to interesting opportunities to target niche nationality groups.

Life expectancy of the population is another interesting measure. For example, in Nigeria, a person born in 2013 has a life expectancy of 52.5 years whereas for someone in Chile, it would be 80.0 years. This equates to 27.5 more years of purchasing over the average Chilean lifetime and, of course, means a far larger potential market for products aimed at older consumers in particular.

**Urbanization**

Urbanization benefits consumer goods companies through accessibility, and urban populations are generally more open to new ideas and are often (but not always) wealthier. Both the degree and speed of urbanization vary significantly across emerging and developing economies.

An interesting trend to note is that some countries that are seeing their total populations decline are still seeing an increase in their urban populations. Chief amongst these are European emerging economies such as Poland, Hungary and Belarus. This means that implementing a strategy to target only urban consumers could still be a winning one. The urban landscape also differs from country to country with some countries focused on one or two major urban centers and others with a larger number of important commercial centers. For example, Georgia’s capital,
Tbilisi, was home to 49.3 percent of the total urban population in 2013; in contrast, Indonesia’s capital, Jakarta, accounted for only 9.1 of urban population in 2013; and the top 10 cities combined accounted for just 25.5 percent. A market which is more concentrated should be easier to enter so it could be strategically worthwhile to enter only the main city or cities.

**Access**
The practicalities of market entry are also key and should be considered in terms of infrastructure, Internet, partners and the retail landscape.
- Will it be difficult to get your products to market?
- Are consumers easily accessible for both direct sales and marketing and promotional activities?
- Would a local partner facilitate market entry? Or is a local partner even a prerequisite?
- Is the retail landscape modern or traditional?

**Infrastructure**
Inadequate infrastructure adds significant costs to doing business in many emerging markets. Roads, ports, railways, airports, telecoms and electricity supply help businesses and the economy run efficiently. Yet poor infrastructure can and is being overcome by corporations, and can also offer additional opportunities for business. Electricity is a key challenge because stable power is needed for running factories, shops and consumers’ homes if they are to purchase electrical products. In India, urbanization, an increasing middle class and economic growth have all put a strain on electricity infrastructure. Many businesses have installed their own generators to combat the frequent power outages, but this cost affects the bottom line.

Godrej and Boyce launched what has been fêted as the world’s cheapest refrigerator in 2010. The refrigerator retails for $69 and was designed to target poor, rural consumers. In a country with 854 million rural inhabitants, this market is huge with a lot of potential. The ChotuKool refrigerator from the outside looks like a box, consumes half the electricity of a standard refrigerator, and stays cool for hours with no power due to its superior insulation.

**Internet**
A lack of Internet access complicates building brand awareness and makes communicating with consumers more difficult. It also poses considerable challenges for those operating in online retailing. Internet use is growing quickly and, in 2013, emerging and developing economies accounted for 68.5 percent of the world’s Internet users. In actual terms, this means that there were 1.8 billion Internet users across emerging and developing economies, but that also means there are still 4.3 billion without Internet access.

Mobile connectivity is increasingly important with many markets leapfrogging fixed broadband in favor of smartphones. Mobile ownership is much more widespread with 89.8 percent of emerging and developing market consumers having mobile phone subscriptions in 2013.

**Retail Landscape**
The retail landscape can vary significantly from country to country. For instance, the top five retailing operations in Thailand account for 29 percent of retail sales, but in Vietnam the figure is far lower at 17 percent. It’s not easy supplying hundreds of thousands of mom and pop stores because they require frequent, but small, deliveries. To meet these distribution challenges, many successful companies employ their own innovative distribution methods. For instance, micro-distributors or “village entrepreneurs” are being used by multinationals across Asia, Africa and Latin America.

In Brazil in 2010, Nestlé launched an Amazon barge — a “floating supermarket” with 100 square meters of selling space which travels to 18 small cities and 800,000 potential consumers. The barge contains well-known Nestlé brands, including Ninho (packaged milk), Maggi (soups and seasonings) and Nescafé (instant coffee). As well as supplying consumers, the barge also supplies micro-distributors in the area.

**Partners**
Apart from exporting directly or selling via a distributor, there are three main choices when entering a new market — go it alone, enter into a strategic partnership or acquire a local company. The business’s attitude to risk should form a large part of the decision alongside the operational realities and challenges on the ground.
Government regulation must also be taken into account. Going it alone can be costly and patience will be required because building a presence in a new market from scratch cannot be achieved overnight. A strategic partnership lessens risks and capital outlay while boosting access to local knowledge, talent and the supply chain. Making an acquisition enables the business to integrate the target company into its operations and maintain a higher degree of control of the market.

The French retailer, Carrefour, is expanding into Africa via a partnership with CFAO to open stores in eight African countries by 2015. CFAO is a distributor and a large supplier of cars, trucks and pharmaceuticals. Carrefour hopes to benefit from CFAO’s local business and government connections and the deal enables it to expand into Africa at relatively low risk.

**Business Environment**

The friendliness of the business environment is also a crucial factor. The practicalities of doing business, the regulatory environment, corruption levels and the skills available in the workforce can all make or break a business. Business can thrive in countries where these factors are not favorable but a carefully thought out strategy is a must.

- Is there a level playing field between domestic and foreign investors?
- Is the rule of law sufficient?
- How can the business beat corruption?
- How can the business recruit and retain talent?

**Ease of Doing Business**

A weak business environment adds costs in terms of both time and money and this should be factored into any expansion plans. The World Bank’s *Doing Business Report* can be useful in gaining an overview of the business environment. In terms of emerging and developing economies, Malaysia ranks highest in 6th position overall, beating the UK, Australia and Canada amongst others. At the other end of the rankings comes Chad – the most difficult country in which to do business from a ranking of 189 economies. In practical terms this means that it takes 16 days to start a business in Malaysia compared to 183 in Chad. Chad might not be at the top of mind for many businesses looking to expand into emerging markets for the first time, but even large economies such as India (134th) and Brazil (116th) fare badly.

**Regulations**

Looking at The Heritage Foundation’s 2014 Business Freedom indicator, which represents the overall burden of regulation as well as the efficiency of government in the regulatory process, Georgia, the Maldives and Lithuania are the best-placed emerging and developing economies with North Korea, Eritrea and Cuba at the bottom. In terms of the largest emerging markets (those with a GDP above $200 million), Malaysia is the best performer followed by Colombia and Mexico, and India brings up the rear. India is overly bureaucratic and has inefficient administrative and judicial systems.

Foreign investors do not receive the same treatment as their local counterparts and foreign ownership caps exist in some sectors. In Malaysia, the government has been liberalizing the rules governing foreign direct investment (FDI) and the opening up of the economy has extended to most economic subsectors.

**Corruption**

At the country level, corruption is strongly linked to economic stability and inflows of foreign direct investment. It affects competition, government efficiency and income distribution. At the business level, it is fraught with risk, not only legal and financial but also reputational. Transparency International collects the most well-known corruption data. Their Corruption Perceptions Index 2013 ranked 177 countries against perceived levels of public sector corruption. Chile, UAE and Qatar were the three best-placed of the large emerging market economies (with total GDP of more than $200 million) while Iraq, Venezuela and Nigeria were the worst performers.

**Human Capital**

Both finding and keeping talent can be a huge challenge in emerging markets. Recruiting local talent can really help in building a successful brand. Local managers will have a deep understanding of cultural norms which is crucial to success. However, skills shortages can be a problem and staff retention is often difficult. These kinds of pressures lead to wage inflation. Between 2008 and 2013, China saw a 45.2 percent increase in wages in manufacturing compared to a 1.5 percent rise in the USA. The days when emerging markets were seen as a source of cheap labor are now over in many countries.

**Tailor Made for Success**

All markets are not the same. All have unique challenges and opportunities. The first and most important step when planning an expansion strategy is to select the market(s) that are right for your business. Our four pillar model, encompassing market, population, access and business environment, brings methodological clarity to selecting new emerging markets. Our model should be tailored on a case-by-case basis because there are sector-specific and business-specific factors which should be added to the matrix. In addition, the importance assigned to each of our 16 factors will differ according to industry sector and company profile. An emerging market strategy is a long term one, and step one on the path to success is to choose wisely.

*Note from the editor: A shorter version of this article was previously published at www.quirks.com.*

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Passing on the Passion for Research
By Garrett McGuire, in collaboration with Stephenie Gordon, PRC

As a young Millennial, I dreamed of becoming a doctor, a lawyer, a teacher and an artist. Later interests in marketing, advertising and consumer understanding brought me to the industry I love today, though, to be honest, I take little responsibility (or credit) for making the connection to marketing research and this is why I speak up today.

I took an advertising class, watched a video on marketing research highlighting ethnographies, listened to a guest lecturer from the field, and followed the advice of a couple trusted college professors to help me find my ultimate career path. They understood my strengths and enough about marketing research to guide my exploration of this industry. The path was not lit with bright lights or even an option as a major; it felt like I was entering an underground secret world.

We need to let the cat out of the bag and make sure Millennials are given a clearer path to our profession because, let’s face it, Millennials are the future of the workforce in general and we need to tap into this resource sooner rather than later.

In the first quarter of 2015, the Pew Research Center reported that Millennials (ages 18–34) represent one in three American workers and have surpassed Gen X to become the largest share of American workers. Fifty-three and half million Millennials have jobs.

As noted, many Millennials are already in the workforce; however, our focus should be on the ones who are just starting their careers or considering a career path. The youngest of Millennials are just entering college or trying to find their own personal path. There is still an opportunity for them to find their way into marketing research just as I did and as many of my Millennial friends have who have a strong passion for the work they are doing. Collectively, as individual people of this industry, it’s going to take a little effort and sweat equity. This article is an invitation to take action, to educate those with similar interests, and to help students make a connection between their passion and our work as an industry.

For Millennials, choosing a major in college is not easy. There are an aggressive number of options to choose from. Some universities offer over 250 programs and then options to minor or double minor or double major to help define specialties. While many aren’t likely sure what exactly they want to do when they leave the university setting, they are often choosing a program that meets their career goals.

Two-thirds of Millennials are graduating college with an average of $27,574 of student loan debt and a combined debt of $1.1 trillion. Compare that to 1993 when less than half of students graduated with debt and those who did had an average of just $9,350 in student loans. With greater financial stress, finding a program is not just finding a topic they enjoy learning about, but also defining a career path that offers an easy transition from college to workforce.

The youngest of Millennials are just entering college or trying to find their own personal path. There is still an opportunity for them to find their way into marketing research.

In pursuit of financial freedom and greater knowledge on a more specific topic than offered in general bachelor degrees, many students look to graduate school. The most recent data published in 2012 by the National Center for Education Statistics shows that graduate degrees awarded increased from 473,502 in 2000–2001 to 754,229 in 2011–2012, a 59 percent increase. Compare that to a 43 percent increase for bachelor degrees and 42 percent increase for doctoral degrees in the same time period. For students, the potential to increase their salary by a few thousand dollars a year outweighs the risk of taking on large tuition bills and possibly debt.

While many higher education institutions are now offering marketing research as part of their repertoire (and doing a great job of attracting and grooming talent), perhaps there is still more we can do to get our field into the minds and consideration sets of students earlier and across the campus.

Two immediate opportunities that come to mind to do so: First, how do we bring awareness to our underground operation? And second, how do we attract talent across many interests and specialties?

In addition, here are three ideas to explore for informing and attracting marketing research’s next batch of young talent:

- Identifying the programs that might have a natural transition into marketing research, even if that transition is not obvious
- Getting involved: Help current students make connections and get involved in marketing research
- Recruiting Millennials: Focus on what’s important to them

Identify the programs that might have a natural transition into marketing research.

In a study Quester did with marketing researchers last year, we noted that most people had no plans to actually enter the field. Many claimed “it just happened” or that they “just fell into” the industry. This finding is not surprising given the earlier point about the field being relatively unknown.

In that same study, participants (n=264) were asked what they wanted to be when they were growing up. Over 30 percent mentioned a science field (doctor, psychologist, etc.), 16 percent mentioned a creative field, and 14 percent wanted to be a teacher. Millennials’ analytical skills, creative problem-solving, desire to educate, and curiosity make us great insight curators for business.


For more information on the Quester study, please contact Garrett McGuire (garrett.mcguire@quester.com)
Specialists’ as similar occupations to a marketing research analyst.6 But what else? What was your major in college or interest before finding marketing research? What connections do you have, or could you make, to local colleges and universities that are needed in our field to secure a strong future? Again, the connections to marketing research may or may not be obvious.

Social work, sociology and psychology all focus on human understanding – a baseline expectation of consumer understanding. English and journalism focus on creative writing – a skill desperately needed to make storytelling a reality for our industry. Graphic design, art and advertising focus on visual storytelling – a specific talent needed to show data and information in a business-friendly way.

Get involved by helping current students get involved
Thinking about those programs that may have an indirect connection to the industry, how can you get involved? How can you tell these students about your work and our industry and help them realize their own unidentified passion for marketing research? Here are some thought starters:

Connect with college professors and program directors
College professors and program directors are usually open to helping students make connections. Search a university website for contact information and schedule a call to introduce yourself and your work. Tell them your objective for bringing awareness to our industry and recruiting talent from programs.

Visit a class, present your work
My first exposure to marketing research was a video. I watched an ethnographer studying the hotel behaviors of business travelers for a popular hotel chain. I thought: “Finally! A career that bridges business and human understanding.” Until that point, I had no idea our field even existed. (To be honest, I didn’t know that it was called “marketing research” until after graduate school…more on that later).

Visiting a class and presenting your work as a researcher is important. To find talent and passion in the next generation of researchers, we need them to know we exist. They need to know what our work looks like and what it entails. They need to know what they’d be doing on a daily basis, what the career path looks like and what kind of growth they can expect (personally and professionally).

6 http://www.bls.gov/ooh/business-and-financial/ market-research-analysts.htm#tab-7

Although there are great marketing research programs,7 it’s not just up to students to find our next generation. We have to get involved across the board.

Connect with students, offer guidance
Every once in a while (and especially after a class visit), you may have students who wish to connect on LinkedIn or with a phone call. They might ask for input on the industry, about your work, or about internship opportunities. Accept their invitation and offer mentorship. Offer a call, email discussion, or a meeting over coffee to identify where they might fit into our work…even if it’s not at your company.

Recruiting Millennials to marketing research
According to a CareerBuilder Employment Brand Research study (2011–2014), Millennials are similar to Boomers in that they seek opportunities meeting their compensation expectations (79 percent for Millennials; 75 percent for Boomers), offer good benefits (66 percent for Millennials; 65 percent for Boomers), and provide work-life balance (49 percent for Millennials;
46 percent for Boomers). What differs is the desire for career advancement: 75 percent for Millennials and 43 percent for Boomers. That could partially explain a slightly dated article in Forbes on why the average Millennial stays at the same job for 4.4 years and 91 percent expect to stay at the same job for less than three years.8

Perhaps that’s simply driven by different life stages. Regardless, it’s clear that Millennials aren’t interested in sitting stagnant in a single position for too long.

And, regardless of how that sounds, it’s okay for them to expect career advancement. Remember, they are leaving college with more debt than any prior generation and looking for financial freedom. It’s up to us, however, to manage those expectations and share our experiences.

The good news is that our future is ripe with opportunity. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average projected percent change in employment from 2012–2022 for all occupations is 11 percent. For market research analysts, it’s 32 percent.9 Growth for survey researchers is projected to increase 13 percent for the same time period.9 This is a great time to join the industry.

Forbes contributor Jacob Morgan offers “The 7 Principles of the Future Employee.”10 Within his seven points, he writes about three for which marketing research is perfectly poised: 1) that the future employee is looking for a flexible work environment; 2) that they are looking for the ability to customize their work; and 3) they’d like the opportunity to become a leader.

How can your organization become the go-to place for Millennials? What changes can you make in your organization or department to appeal to future talent? There is one more (likely anecdotal) point to be made —even after I started my first job in marketing research (post graduate school), I didn’t know that I had joined the marketing research industry. I studied advertising and consumer behavior and my first gig was in the “Consumer Insights” department. I didn’t know the definitional differences that existed between market, marketing, and consumer research until I went to my first conference (which, thankfully, was only a few months after I started). Early education is key.

As an industry, what else can we do to help potential marketing researchers find us? Can we sponsor students to join us at conferences at no cost to them? If we want talent to see what they could be doing, then we have to show them. And perhaps we have to invest in that. Who’s willing to sponsor the future talent? What else are you willing to contribute, individually? I invite you to take the next step with me in finding, nurturing and cultivating the next generation of passionate researchers.

Garrett McGuire is vice president at Quester, a marketing research company in Des Moines, Iowa. He can be reached at Garrett.McGuire@Quester.com. Stephenie Gordon, PRC is vice president at Schlesinger Associates and can be reached at Stephenie@schlesingerassociates.com. The contributors would like to extend a special thanks to Kassandra Barnes, practice leader, research strategy at CareerBuilder, for sources related to Millennials in the workforce.

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Using Marketing Research for International Business Development

By John Watters
Introduction

Many marketing research professionals encounter skepticism from executives and other business decision makers when presenting their findings or even whether to conduct research in the first place. This occurs today much as it has throughout business history. However, more often than not, the benefits of the insights and knowledge gained from marketing research more than outweigh the costs of the resources to conduct it.

In my own experience, this was particularly true when considering new business opportunities in international markets. A firm should be especially interested in conducting marketing research when the market territory is unknown. When the product is still relatively new, it makes the case even more compelling.

In this article, I’ll discuss three examples of international business development opportunities in the telecommunications industry from the 1990s. These examples may now be a bit dated, but the lessons still hold true today: there’s substantial value in doing marketing research and a company faces huge potential financial loss by failing to do so.

There’s substantial value in doing market research and a company faces huge potential financial loss by failing to do so

Background – Cellular Telephones and Cable Television in the 1990s

As ubiquitous as cell phones are today throughout the world, it’s easy to forget that it was once a nascent industry. In the early 1990s, there was certainly optimism from telecom executives regarding great potential in the product but it was still very unclear how large and how profitable cell phones could be. My employer at the time, SBC,¹ was looking for opportunities to expand its cellular telephone businesses. However, there were limits on the opportunities to grow in the U.S. because of restrictive FCC licensing requirements for wireless airspace and the number of operators allowed in a given city or region. On the other hand, there were many more international opportunities.

In the early 1980s, many countries had granted only a single cellular license and it was usually given to the incumbent wireline telephone company. By the 1990s, however, many countries began to recognize the economic importance of competition and started to offer second cellular licenses to the highest bidders, subject to reasonable conditions, establishing the technical and financial credibility and feasibility of the bidders.

Another industry held promise for international opportunity—cable television. In the 1970s and 1980s, households in the U.S. began subscribing to cable television at an increasing rate. By the 1990s, the technology of providing cable television allowed these companies to begin offering wireline telephone service in competition with incumbent telephone companies. SBC was an incumbent wireline telephone company and began to lose wireline telephone customers to the cable companies since these new competitors offered lower prices for their telephone service. While SBC was facing new pressure from domestic cable companies, however, new international opportunities presented themselves to SBC. In many countries, the opportunity to buy or merge with a cable company offered SBC an avenue to be the competitor taking customers from the incumbent telephone company. While SBC might lose customers at home in the U.S., it could replace or expand its business by growing internationally through cable television.

Both industries, cellular and cable television, were poised to grow substantially in the next decades. The questions facing SBC in evaluating these opportunities were how big and how fast these markets would grow, how much they should be willing to pay for second licenses, what types of households and businesses would most likely buy from a new provider and how much these new customers would be willing to pay. These are, of course, the types of questions that good marketing research can help answer.

Marketing Research and Demand Analysis

My job at SBC during this period was to serve as the director of corporate demand analysis. My team was responsible for conducting research to help answer the important questions SBC faced when exploring these international opportunities. We worked closely with SBC’s in-house marketing research professionals to design research studies to help answer these types of questions:

¹ SBC, originally Southwestern Bell Corporation. SBC later merged with Pacific Bell, Ameritech, BellSouth and AT&T. The company is now known as AT&T.
• What is the long-run household and business penetration rate for these new services (cellular and cable television) in a particular market?
• How much are customers willing to pay for these new services?
• How likely are they to buy these services from a second provider?
• What types of customers are most likely to buy these services (income, ethnicity, geographic area, household size, etc.)?

To conduct our research, SBC’s demand analysts and marketing researchers traveled to a particular country, and then selected and hired a local marketing research firm. The local firm was essential to understanding local culture, offering feasible survey methods, helping with questionnaire design and interpreting results. After the survey data was collected, SBC’s demand analysts and marketing researchers would analyze the results and present findings to SBC’s executives. We also worked closely with SBC’s international business development teams by producing market forecasts and delivering insights on the market in preparing the business plan.

Three Stories
To illustrate the importance of international marketing research, I’ll relate three stories of our experience at SBC. The first serves as an example of why pursing a business opportunity without conducting research can be risky for a firm. The second example shows why business executives and decision makers should at least consider the information a credible marketing research team can provide. The third example shows why credible marketing research can help a firm avoid making investments in what turns out to be a poor opportunity.

The market research results were validated historically and SBC avoided a costly mistake by heeding the research results

First Story – United Kingdom
In the early 1990s, SBC purchased a large cable television provider in the United Kingdom. The company primarily served customers in the middle part of England. The purchase was based on the assumption that demand for cable television in the United Kingdom would mirror that of the United States. As you can see from the chart on the left, cable television household penetration in the U.S. had increased substantially from the late 1970s to the early 1990s. If cable television was as popular in the United Kingdom as it had been in the U.S., the market was set to explode.

The explosion never happened. As also illustrated in the chart, the demand for cable television has not approached the level experienced in the U.S. The assumption that the demand for cable television in the United Kingdom would be similar to the U.S. was not based on marketing research conducted by SBC.

SBC learned an important lesson. Even though the United Kingdom has similar language, culture and incomes to the U.S., the tastes for cable television are widely different. To enter an international market, even a familiar one, without conducting marketing research increases the risk of misunderstanding and miscalculating the financial opportunity.

Second Story – South Korea
In the early 1990s, SBC was evaluating an opportunity to join a South Korean cellular operator. In this case, SBC conducted marketing research to help measure the potential value. The research determined that there was a huge opportunity in the South Korea cellular market. The research team forecasted early and significant growth in the number of people who would buy cellular service. The results seemed too good, however, for some executives at SBC. To paraphrase, one executive incredulously said, “You mean to tell me that South Korea

2 I was not part of this decision since my team was not involved. Consultants and other advisors to SBC may have conducted market research but I was not aware of it.
Who is worthy of your trust?

That’s really the question. Who can you rely on in every aspect to deliver the kind of service you need? Since we’ve been in business for more than half a century we know about service, reliability and yes, trust.

To enter an international market, even a familiar one, without conducting market research increases the risk of misunderstanding and miscalculating the financial opportunity

Our marketing research concluded that cellular market penetration was indeed going to continue to lag other developing countries. SBC, in following the research, concluded that the opportunity was not going to be a strong financial gain, so it passed on the bid. A member of the bid team told me, “That was the best money we’ve ever spent on market research. The executives were determined to bid on India, but the market research told them to back off. Thanks for the great information!”

As shown in the chart below, cellular market penetration today continues to be among the lowest internationally. The marketing research results were validated historically and SBC avoided a costly mistake by heeding the research results.

Conclusion

In this short summary of my experiences with using marketing research, I’ve tried to demonstrate the value of conducting research, especially in international markets when conditions are unknown. It is well worth the time, money and effort to use marketing research to investigate the potential opportunity of an unknown market with new products and/or new competitors. I’ve learned critical lessons about the value of doing research, doing it well and paying attention to the results. I’ve had experience with conducting useful research only to have it fall on deaf ears at the executive level. I’ve had experience with decision makers asking for information after the fact...when it’s too late to conduct marketing research and learn anything useful. I urge businesses and researchers to conduct marketing research, do it well and pay attention to the results. Decisions based on faulty or missing information are decisions that can’t be undone—to the company’s loss.

John Watters is Associate Professor of Economics and Chair, School of Business at McKendree University, Lebanon, IL.
How to Write Shorter Surveys: Treat Questionnaire Design as a Professional Discipline

By David F. Harris

Keeping surveys relatively short is important to ensure data quality and to save money. In many cases, the quality of responses starts to diminish after approximately 15 minutes, and every extra 5 to 10 minutes added to the survey costs more for interviewing, fielding, analyzing and reporting. The pressure to keep surveys brief is increasing because more people are taking surveys on their smartphones and, as we know, attention spans aren’t exactly increasing.

Furthermore, we have seen declining response rates over the years. But declining response rates are not just functions of survey length; they have a lot to do with poorly written questionnaires. When surveys include questions that are unclear, unanswerable, or biased, some respondents drop out or don’t take the rest of the questions seriously. Poorly written questionnaires have a corrosive effect on the industry, making it harder and harder to get and keep respondents.

These are not new issues. The benefits of shorter, well-written questionnaires have always been better data at lower cost. We have been talking about these issues for at least three decades without much progress. How do we solve these problems? As Albert Einstein said, “The significant problems we face today cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them.”

The fundamental problem is that we have not treated questionnaire design as a professional discipline. We would only ask lawyers with years of legal training to write legal documents. Yet with questionnaire design, almost anyone in the office is asked to write the first draft of the questionnaire and email it around to almost anyone else to edit. Lawyers have years of professional training and have passed the Bar examination. What training do our questionnaire writers have? What tests have they passed?

Few, in reality, have much training on the topic, have books on their desk about questionnaire design or have studied how to write questionnaires. We have a 75-year history of scientific inquiry and research on survey response. There are hundreds of published studies that inform us on how to write better questionnaires. Who among us can cite three or four experiments that have changed how we do so? We can do better.

Below are key themes associated with treating questionnaire design as a professional discipline. These are also represented in Figure 1, The Framework for Writing Questionnaires.

When we raise our expertise to the level of a professional discipline, we change the relationship with our clients. We improve consulting stature by working with clients to clearly define decisions and determine ways by which to identify and obtain the information needed. When it comes to writing questionnaires, our knowledge and expertise should be so obvious to our clients that they defer to us.

Plan Research to Support Decision-Making

Planning research to support decisions, sometimes referred to as action-oriented marketing research, is a common refrain, but far more challenging than meets the eye. In order to do it, we need to be well-versed in the key decisions marketers need to make and the information they need to make those decisions. This is critical for questionnaire design — but note that this happens well before questionnaires are written and before we even know if a survey is needed.

The key decisions marketers make for their brands are not so obvious. Both marketers and marketing researchers think in terms of either information requests (e.g., “Why are customers setting up accounts but not ordering? What are the emotional needs in this category?”) or study-types (e.g., “We need to do focus groups. We need to do a survey with users and non-users”). One or two decision always underlie both information and study-type requests. It is important for us to work with clients to articulate those decisions precisely.

Figure 1. The Framework for Writing Questionnaires
When asked for decisions, people almost always give an information request. I have found that it helps to write decisions down as declarative statements to help distinguish decisions from information needs, which I write as questions by utilizing the practice of filling in the blank as follows:

*We will decide ______________________________.*

It helps to offer possibilities. You might ask, “Are we going to decide to stop running the program, adjust it, or maybe roll it out to a new target market?” A clearly specified decision helps focus the research efforts.

Here are six major decisions marketers need to make for the success of their brands:

1. **Product Benefits:** We will decide what benefits to offer.
2. **Targeting & Segmentation:** We will decide whom to target and whether a segmentation approach makes sense. (Does it make economic sense to offer a different product benefit or different approach to defined, reachable groups?)
3. **Positioning:** We will decide what we need customers within each target group to think and feel for them to buy our product or service.
4. **Market Approach:** We will decide whether to steal share, grow the market or create a new market.
5. **“Story” to Establish Positioning:** We will decide what story we need to tell to establish that positioning (e.g., messages, creative, customer service, etc.).
6. **Delivery:** We will determine the campaign to deliver the story to establish the positioning within each target. The decisions are always more detailed versions of these six key areas. For example, we might need to decide whether the benefit customers are seeking in a particular skin care category is medicinal or aesthetic. Or we might decide whether to steal share from a particular brand. (See Key Decisions and Information Needed, below.)

Clearly defining the decisions and the information needed is the first step in the research planning process. When planning is not practiced to support decisions, we end up with scope-creep. Without the focus on information needed to support decisions, what is stopping people from adding “nice to know” questions?

Ultimately, we need to be really good at consulting with clients to specifically define the decisions they need to make. Only then do we know what information is needed.

This is the first and most important step in keeping our questionnaires shorter because most decisions are made based on a small set of data.

### Conduct Qualitative Research

To plan research, and write good questionnaires, we need to be well-versed in qualitative research. Most serious research efforts involve both qualitative and quantitative needs and approaches. Qualitative research offers numerous ways to explore topics that are both different from and complementary to those of quantitative research. Knowing the benefits of qualitative research and how to apply them to our quantitative work greatly enhances both the understanding of what’s being researched and our ability to write an effective questionnaire.

Performing qualitative research is almost always the first step in any research process. To develop a thorough understanding of a topic, we need the insights that only it can provide. When it comes to writing the quantitative questionnaire, we need insights and information qualitative research provides to know *what* to ask and *how* to ask it. Imagine trying to write a question that asks respondents to select which of several items constituted their reasons for cancelling their service with your company. How would you know what to put on the list without first talking to people? Even if you know the issues, you need to learn (or validate) the words and phrases they use to describe these issues.

One of the biggest mistakes in questionnaire design is to ask for information that is inherently qualitative in nature, which tend to be long and skip around from topic to topic, causing error and bias. Another, as previously mentioned, is to write the questionnaire without the information and insights that qualitative research provides. These contain questions that don’t make sense to respondents because the key issues are not understood or because we don’t use the words and phrases respondents’ use.

Being well-versed in the differences between qualitative and quantitative information needs is a must. Likewise, it’s necessary to have a deep understanding of how qualitative research will enhance our ability to write a good questionnaire. Doing qualitative research first gets the qualitative issues out of the questionnaire and it helps us to write a questionnaire that is more conversational and to the point because we know how respondents think and feel about the issues.

### Plan the Questionnaire

While we are doing qualitative research, it is extremely helpful to write a questionnaire plan.

A questionnaire plan helps outline the categories of information needed. To keep us focused, we write the decisions at the top and then outline the categories of information needed (see an example in Figure 2). Mapping out the categories of information needed helps to keep questionnaires shorter and avoid order bias and order misunderstanding.

---

**Key Decisions and Information Needed**

As an exercise, have everyone on the team write, in declarative statements, the key decisions they need to make for the brand over the next 18 months.

*We will decide ______________________________.*

For each decision, write, in question format, the information needed to make each decision.

Here is a partial example:

**Decision:** We will decide which of seven concepts to progress to volumetric testing.

**Information needed:**

1. What are the purchase intention scores for each concept?
2. What are the interest scores for each concept?
3. What are the likes and dislikes for each concept?

**Question:** Might you take these concepts through a brief round of qualitative exploration to adjust concepts before quantitative testing or to possibly delete concepts that seem to fail miserably? What would be the decisions and information needed in that case?
Once you get the categories of information mapped out, talk with clients not about how to write questions, but about the information needed. When they say, “Ask respondents what percent of their brand purchases are their priority choice,” you can discuss what they really mean and need. Do they want to know which brands they buy the most, or which brands they like the most? And what time frame makes sense (e.g., past 30 days, past 7 days, etc.)?

The point is that we need to talk with clients about the information needed, not how to write questions. Later, we will write questions. We will of course check with our clients to ensure that we are capturing the right information and using the right words and phrases, but question form and structure are part of our training as questionnaire design professionals.

In column three of the Questionnaire Plan, we document how we plan to analyze the data. We might write: “See if message reception is correlated with purchasing and intent to purchase.”

In the middle column, we capture how to ask the questions. Sometimes I write different versions of questions that I might discuss with my client or that I might test in pretesting. It is also helpful to make notes about issues to explore in pretesting. For example, suppose you have the question: “In the past 30 days, how many times have you taken a vitamin?” I might add the following notes for pretesting:

- Is a 30-day time frame too long?
- Is the concept “vitamin” difficult? Are respondents including supplements and minerals? What about fish oil, calcium or iron, for example?

**Figure 2. The Questionnaire Plan**

- **Decisions**
  - Information Needed
  - How to As the Questions
  - How to Analyze the Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information Needed</th>
<th>How to As the Questions</th>
<th>How to Analyze the Data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Screener Information</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Unaided Advertising &amp; Brand Recall</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prompted Brand Awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Action &amp; Intention</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demographic Questions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Make Questions Clear**

1. State the unit of measurement.
2. Use the vocabulary of respondents.
3. Use precise words and phrases.
4. When using the word “you,” make sure respondents know to whom you are referring.
5. Make sure the question is really asking only one question.
6. When asking for percentages, make sure the base is clear.
7. Make sure the question stem and the answer choices match each other.
8. Use bold, underlining, italics, and/or capitalization to highlight key words and phrases.

**Make Questions Answerable**

1. State time frames in which people can recall the information you need.
2. Don’t assume regularity of behavior.
3. Don’t ask people for information they simply don’t have.
4. Screen respondents to make sure each question applies to them.
5. Make “Don’t know” an answer choice if some respondents simply don’t know the answer to your question.

**Make Questions Easy**

1. Keep the question stem fewer than 25 words.
2. When writing questions, say the question out loud as if you were talking to someone.
3. Limit the length of the questionnaire.
4. Don’t ask for more detail than you really need.
5. Soften questions with phrases such as “approximately,” “your best estimate,” or “as best you remember.”
6. Don’t ask questions in the form of complex grids.
7. Add labels to answer categories.

**Make Questions Unbiased**

1. Do not introduce ideas or opinions in questions that will influence responses.
2. Make sure that none of the answer choices is more loaded than any of the others.
3. Make clear that either a positive or a negative answer is equally acceptable.
4. Randomize answer choices if there is a possibility of order bias.
5. To get sensitive information, consider disguising the question, shifting the focus away from the respondent, softening the question, or collecting correlated data.
The "Think Aloud" Method for Pretesting

The think-aloud method for pretesting asks respondents to verbalize their thought process as they try to answer each question. In this example, the interviewer read the question and the respondent verbalized his thought process as he tried to answer.

Interviewer: "How many cars do you currently own?"

Respondent: "We have three cars, in that I have a car, my wife has a car, and we have a car for our 19-year-old son, but he is away at college, so I am not sure if you want me to count that one. We only own one of them, though, and that would be the one that my son drives. The car that I drive is actually a truck, but I assume you want to know how many vehicles we drive, right? The car my wife drives is actually a company car, but we use it as a family car as well, so I am not sure if you want me to count that one. So I guess I'll just say two, but I don't know if that is the right answer."

The think-aloud method is useful for peeking into mental processes. This example reveals several problems with the question. Both the concepts of "car" and "ownership" are ambiguous and need clarification. The term "you" is also unclear to this respondent. He doesn’t know whether to count his son’s car. Clearly, pretesting revealed a host of problems with a seemingly simple question.

Checklist for Questionnaire Design Competency

- What are two or three books that you have used over the years to learn about how to write questionnaires? What did you learn from each?
- Tell me about three or four experiments or experimental effects that have shaped how you write questions.
- What are two or three books that you have used over the years to learn about how to write questionnaires? What did you learn from each?
- Tell me about three or four experiments or experimental effects that have shaped how you write questions.
- What is your opinion about the concept of "car" and "ownership"?
- Under what circumstances would you use an even- versus odd-numbered bipolar scale?

Don’t let anyone tell you they don’t have time to write a questionnaire plan. Using this process makes writing the questionnaire faster because you have fewer rounds of edits.

Questionnaire planning also generates shorter questionnaires which translates to faster fielding and lower costs.

Learn the Guidelines for Writing Questionnaires

There are many guidelines for writing questions—too many to include in this article. Figure 3 displays a selection of guidelines on how to make questions clear, answerable, easy and unbiased.

As professional questionnaire designers, we need to have a solid understanding of these guidelines and and many others not listed here. For example, not listed: asking respondents to select from a list, rating things on scales, answering open-ended questions, and visually displaying questions.

When we have a working knowledge of guidelines for how to write questionnaires, we are in a much better position to create questionnaires that make sense to respondents, that feel conversational, that don’t drone on too long and that yield unbiased data.

Please note that there are details and nuances associated with each guideline. It isn’t enough to know the guideline. Applying them takes lots of practice.

Conduct Proper Pretesting (Cognitive Interviewing)

One of the most critical steps in questionnaire design is pretesting — known in academic settings as cognitive interviewing — but it is rarely done properly.

Proper pretesting involves interviewing respondents to find out what questions mean to them, how they came up with their answers and to uncover any problems with the questionnaire. We use techniques such as:

- Asking respondents to tell us in their own words what they think each question is asking. This way, you will find out if the questions are working as intended.
- Asking respondents how they came up with their answers to specific questions. This helps us see if they struggled with the question or if there was ambiguity about how to answer it.
- Finding out what comes to mind when respondents think about certain terms and phrases in the questionnaire. For example, ask, "What does the term 'family member' mean to you?" Often, we find that respondents have different definitions for terms and phrases than we do.
- Probing to find out if questions were hard to answer or why they took longer than expected to answer.

Proper pretesting reveals all sorts of problems with questions that we had no idea existed, but many companies’ version of pretesting involves sending questionnaires out and seeing if they come back with answers. That is not proper pretesting.

Summary

We started with the goal of writing shorter questionnaires, but that is really not the target. When we treat questionnaire design as a professional discipline, we get shorter questionnaires and much more.

When we treat questionnaire design as a professional discipline, we write shorter questionnaires that make sense to respondents. We reduce the length of most questionnaires by 20 to 50 percent, and we reduce dropout rates.

The benefits of treating questionnaire design as a professional discipline include saving money, getting more accurate data, understanding the subject matter better and, ultimately, helping our organizations make better decisions.

It will require some work, but let’s commit ourselves to doing it.

David F. Harris is author of, The Complete Guide to Writing Questionnaires: How to Get Better Information for Better Decisions. He conducts training workshops on how to write better questionnaires and improve research efficiency. He can be contacted at david@DavidFHarris.com.
The Marketing Research Association (MRA) Sadly Announces the Passing of Two Industry Legends

Sharon Crockett Mutter, January 28, 1942–May 4, 2015
Sharon Mutter passed away on May 14, 2015 in her home in Carmel, Indiana of natural causes. Sharon was born on January 28, 1942 in Indianapolis, Indiana to the late Dr. Harold M. Crockett and Harriet Martin Crockett. Sharon lived in the Indianapolis area all of her life. She attended Shortridge High School and Butler University where she attained a Master’s Degree in Education. Sharon was a member of Pi Beta Phi at Butler. She became an elementary school teacher until she retired after having her second child to be a stay-at-home mother. Sharon returned to work in 1979 and was employed at former Walker Research, Inc.

Sharon began her own business, Sharon Mutter Field Sources, Inc., in 1994. She enjoyed a career more than 32 years long in marketing research. Through this courageous adventure, she met people from all across the country by attending numerous conferences and achieved much success in the marketing research profession. She also received multiple awards throughout the years, including the Honorary Lifetime Membership Award in 2005, the Marketing Research Association’s Award of Excellence in 1997, the Distinguished Service Award in 1999 and the Great Lakes Chapter Service Award, also in 1997. Ms. Mutter served on every board position in the Chapter and sat on multiple committees. She developed the “Buddy Program” to help new members of the Chapter get acclimated at the annual conferences. She was then affectionately nicknamed “Buddy” by her colleagues.

Sharon retired on January 1, 2015 and was planning to attend her final conference in June (ISC in San Diego) to be honored for her retirement, service and undying love for marketing research. Her final accomplishment was finally joining Facebook.

Elyse Gammer, April 23, 1951–July 1, 2015
Elyse Gammer, past MRA president, past chair and recent committee member of the Professional Standards Committee, passed away suddenly on Wednesday, July 1, 2015 at Norwalk Hospital. Born in Norwalk on April 23, 1951, she was the daughter of Ernest Gammer and the late Dorothy Bobrowsky Gammer.

Elyse had a long and distinguished career in the marketing research industry as a speaker, business leader and manager. In addition to her service to MRA, which included years of volunteerism leading to her being elected Chairman of the Board and five years as chief operating officer, she was senior vice president at Dennis and Company for more than a decade, and vice president of client services at Greenfield Consulting Group for several years.

Beyond her many professional accomplishments, Elyse was devoted to her family and enjoyed entertaining and hosting her family’s activities, especially on holidays. Her vibrant personality, personal and professional leadership and deep devotion to her family and friends will be sorely missed. She was a bright light to all who knew her. In addition to her beloved father, Ernest Gammer, Elyse is survived by her sister Barbara Gammer of Bridgeport, several aunts, uncles, cousins, and a myriad of friends.

We extend our condolences to the countless friends and family members of Sharon and Elyse, including their extended family in the marketing research industry and at MRA, specifically.

Think Virtual Fieldwork
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Think Fast,
Think Smart,
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“300 or more panel profile dimensions”
Flexible and fast programming capabilities
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