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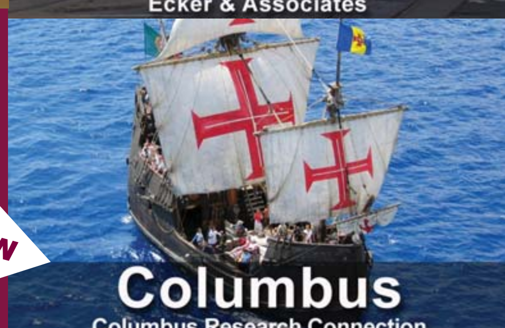

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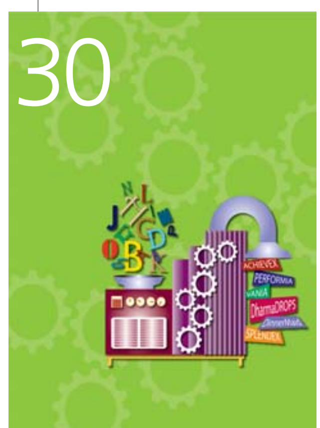

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Chicago	Apr 21-23
Atlanta	May 20-22
Cincinnati	Jun 24-26
New York	Jul 28-30
Minneapolis	Aug 26-28
San Francisco	Sep 29-Oct 1
Chicago	Nov 4-6
Philadelphia	Dec 8-10

104 | Designing Effective Questionnaires: A Step by Step Workshop $2,095

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Los Angeles	Feb 26-28
Chicago	Apr 29-May 1
Baltimore	Jul 8-10
San Francisco	Sep 9-11
Cincinnati	Oct 21-23
Philadelphia	Dec 2-4

106 | Online Research Best Practices & Innovations $1,695

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Baltimore	Nov 18-19

202 | Focus Group Moderator Training $2,595

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Cincinnati	Mar 11-14
Cincinnati	Apr 29-May 2
Cincinnati	Jun 17-20
Cincinnati	Aug 5-8
Cincinnati	Sep 22-25
Cincinnati	Nov 4-7
Cincinnati	Dec 9-12

203 | Specialized Moderator Skills for Qualitative Research Applications $2,595

Cincinnati	Apr 1-4
Cincinnati	Aug 11-14
Cincinnati	Nov 10-13

207 | Qualitative Technology Workshop: Recording, Reporting & Delivering $1,695

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Los Angeles	Nov 20-21

301 | Writing & Presenting Actionable Marketing Research Reports $2,095

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Baltimore	Aug 5-7
Cincinnati	Oct 8-10
San Francisco	Dec 3-5

501 | Applications of Marketing Research $1,695

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601 | Data Analysis for Marketing Research: The Fundamentals $1,695

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Cincinnati	Oct 6-7
San Francisco	Dec 1-2

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Cincinnati	Jun 10-13
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603 | Practical Multivariate Analysis $2,495

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Los Angeles	Oct 14-16

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Focus Market Research, Inc. - GroupNet™

CALIFORNIA (Northern)

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Nichols Research, Inc. - GroupNet™ - Fremont

Fresno

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Elliott Benson

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Nichols Research, Inc. - GroupNet™ - San Francisco
Plaza Research - San Francisco
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San Jose

Nichols Research, Inc. - GroupNet™ - Sunnyvale

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Fieldwork Los Angeles, Inc.
Trotta Associates Irvine - First Choice Facilities

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Adept Consumer Testing - Beverly Hills GroupNet™
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Advanced Marketing Perspectives
ASI Entertainment
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Assistance in Marketing - Los Angeles
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Atkins Research Group, Inc.
Facts and Figures Inc.
Focus Pointe Global - Los Angeles
LW Research Group
Meczka Marketing
Murray Hill Center West
Plaza Research - Los Angeles
Qualitative Insights
Savitz Field & Focus
Schlesinger Associates - Los Angeles
Trotta Associates MDR - First Choice Facilities

San Diego

Flagship Research
Luth Research
Plaza Research - San Diego
Taylor Research, Inc. - GroupNet™

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Denver

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Colorado Market Research
Fieldwork Denver, Inc.
Plaza Research - Denver
TAi - Denver

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Norwalk

New England Marketing Research

Stamford

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Plaza Research - Hollywood
WAC of South Florida

Jacksonville

Irwin Research Services

Miami

20/20 Research - Miami
Miami Market Research, Inc.
National Opinion Research Services
Rife Market Research, Inc.

Orlando

AccuData Market Research
Schlesinger Associates - Orlando

Tampa

Herron Associates Inc., Tampa - GroupNet™
Plaza Research - Tampa
Superior Research - First Choice Facilities
TAi - Tampa Bay

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Focus Pointe Global - Atlanta
Jackson Associates, Inc. - GroupNet™
John Stolzberg Market Research
Murray Hill Center Southeast
Plaza Research - Atlanta
Schlesinger Associates - Atlanta
Superior Research - First Choice Facilities

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Fieldwork Chicago - Downtown
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The Energy Annex

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Fieldwork Boston, Inc.
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Lucas Market Research, LLC - GroupNet™
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Assistance in Marketing - Morristown
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Focus Pointe Global - North Jersey
Meadowlands Consumer Center, Inc. - GroupNet™
Plaza Research - Paramus
PMcR Research, Inc.
Schlesinger Associates - Edison
TAi - New Jersey

New Jersey - Southern

JRA, J. Reckner Associates - First Choice Facilities
Plaza Research - Marlton

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Fieldwork New York, Inc. - Westchester
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JRA, J. Reckner Associates - First Choice Facilities
MarketView - Tarrytown

New York City

Advanced Focus
Focus Plus Inc. - First Choice Facilities
Focus Pointe Global - New York
Focus Room - New York
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Murray Hill Center
New York Consumer Center - GroupNet™
New York Focus
Schlesinger Associates - New York
SIS International Research 22nd Street

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Leibowitz Market Research Associates, Inc. - GroupNet™

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First in Focus Research, Inc.
L & E Research

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Assistance in Marketing - Cincinnati
Market Inquiry
MarketVision Research
QFact Marketing Research, LLC
Various Views Research

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Focus Groups of Cleveland Survey Center
Pat Henry - Cleveland

Columbus

Assistance in Marketing - Columbus
Delve - Columbus

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Philadelphia - Suburban

Delve - Philadelphia
Focus Pointe Global - Bala Cynwyd
Focus Suites of Philadelphia
GFK Strategic Marketing
Group Dynamics in Focus, Inc. - GroupNet™
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Pittsburgh

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Nashville

20/20 Research

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Tammadge Market Research, Inc.

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Schlesinger Associates - Dallas

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CQS Research
MRS
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Plaza Research - Houston
Savitz Field and Focus
Schlesinger Associates - Houston

San Antonio

Galloway Research Service - GroupNet™

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Fairfax

Metro Research Services, Inc.

Richmond

Martin Focus Group Services Inc. - Richmond

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in case you missed it...

news and notes on marketing and research

Frankly, my dear, the force is with them

Fad films will come and go, but the classics still dominate the top 10, according to a recent study conducted by Rochester, N.Y., research company Harris Interactive. In at No. 1 is the Civil War epic, *Gone with the Wind*. Number two is *Star Wars* and rounding out the top three is *Casablanca*. These are the results of a nationwide Harris Poll of 2,279 U.S. adults surveyed online.

Another fantasy film comes in at number four, *The Lord of the Rings*. Next the hills are alive as *The Sound of Music* is number five on the favorite movie list, and then we're following the yellow brick road on our way to see *The Wizard of Oz*. In at number seven is *The Notebook*, and number eight is *Forrest Gump*. Tied for number nine on the list of all-time favorite movies are two that at first blush are very different but are really about the same things: family, honor and action. Inigo Montoya and Michael Corleone attempt to avenge their fathers in *The Princess Bride* and *The Godfather*, respectively.

Different groups all have their favorite movies. Men say *Star Wars* is their favorite movie, followed by *Gone with the Wind*. Women, however, say *Gone with the Wind* is their favorite movie followed by *The Sound of Music*. Echo Boomers (those aged 18-31) and Generation X (those aged 32-43) favor *Star Wars* first but differ on the second favorite. The youngest age group goes for *The Notebook* while the Gen Xers cite *The Lord of the Rings*. Baby Boomers (those aged 44-62) and matures (those aged 63 and older) each cite *Gone with the Wind* as their favorites. For the second favorite, Baby Boomers go for *Casablanca* and matures for *The Sound of Music*. For whites, *Gone with the Wind* is their favorite movie while blacks cite *Casablanca*, and Hispanics say their favorite is *The Notebook*. In this election year, favorite movies seem to be the common ground as Democrats, Republicans and Independents say *Gone with the Wind* is their favorite.

Customers weigh in on market research suppliers' service

As the adage goes: "Those who can, do. Those who can't, teach." So how do market research suppliers promising to deliver the in-depth insights into the consumer rate among their own customers for satisfaction? An online survey of market research professionals conducted by MarketResearchCareers.com reveals that among more than 40 leading market research suppliers spanning three categories, Forrester Research, e-Rewards and Decision Analyst have the most-satisfied customers.

To determine this year's rankings, the 2008 edition of MarketResearchCareers' Annual Survey of Market Research Professionals captured the satisfaction level of nearly 450 regular customers of 40+ market research suppliers. Below are the top three firms, ranked by customer satisfaction, within each market research supplier segment:

Syndicated research suppliers
1. Forrester
2. Gartner
3. Nielsen

Online sample providers
1. e-Rewards
2. Survey Sampling International
3. Greenfield Online

Full-service research suppliers
1. Decision Analyst
2. BASES
3. Lieberman

Drinking with the stars: famous names boost wine and spirits sales

Celebrity culture and the U.S. fascination with it may be one of the few things immune to the current economic slowdown, as celebrity wines boasting the names of the well-known and well-loved are up nearly 19 percent in grocery store sales since last year and represent 0.9 percent ($41.8 million) of total wine sales, according to a study conducted by New York researcher The Nielsen Company.

Celebrity-driven alcohol beverage products (those branded with the name of or directly associated with a famous individual) are gaining popularity in the U.S., and wine is emerging as the star of the show. Gaining marketing leverage from celebrities as diverse as film director Francis Ford Coppola, former NFL coach Mike Ditka, professional golfer Greg Norman and recent releases from Martha Stewart and Paul Newman, celebrity wines are all the rage.

"Celebrities are increasingly lending their names to wine and spirits for a variety of reasons," said Richard Hurst, senior vice president, beverage alcohol, The Nielsen Company. "While some celebrities have had a long-standing personal affinity for these product categories, others view these products as extensions of their established 'lifestyle brands' and have connected with willing supplier partners to produce and market them. Ideally, the celebrity's reputation also helps reinforce the company's image in the marketplace."

Celebrity spirits sales show the same growth rate (19 percent) in grocery stores and represent 0.3 percent ($7.5 million) of the total spirits category. In liquor stores, celebrity spirits are growing at an even faster rate, showing a nearly 21 percent increase since last year, compared to celebrity wines' liquor store growth rate of 8 percent.

Nielsen's research shows that while promotions such as in-store advertising are driving incremental sales, celebrity wines do not necessarily receive much more retail paparazzi support.

Fifty percent of both celebrity wine and table wine volume is sold on promotion, but when it comes to pricing consumers are paying an average of $8.50 per 750ml bottle of celebrity wine versus $5.75 per bottle of table wine. Most celebrity wines are priced between $12 and $15.

"While a celebrity on the label is not a sure-fire recipe for success, marketers appear to be homing in on the kinds of celebrity products and positioning that make brands stick," said Hurst.

High-end spirits, wine and beer survive in a stale alcohol industry

Trading up to higher-quality spirits, wine and beer continued to fuel beverage alcohol industry growth in 2007, but the rates of growth slowed compared to previous boom years. Wine consumption increased 4 percent while spirits grew 3.2 percent, and beer rose just 1.2 percent, according to the 2008 Handbook Advance published by The Beverage Information Group, Norwalk, Conn.

The weakening U.S. economy was a major contributor to the slowdown, especially at restaurants and bars, which are key to the decade-long expansion of spirits and wine. Still, the distilled spirits business was up (reaching 182.4 million nine-liter cases) for the tenth consecutive year, wine sales grew for the 14th consecutive year (hitting 294.4 million cases) and beer recovered for the second year in a row from a drop in 2005 (marking 2.93 billion cases).

Wine continued to find favor with new legal-age drinkers, American craft beers continued a run of double-digit growth and imported spirits showed great strength last year. High-end products across all categories continued to outperform the business as a whole.

Vodka, the single largest spirit category, grew 6.7 percent in 2007. The category now accounts for 28.9 percent of the spirits business. Rum, the second-largest spirit category, also showed power, growing 5.1 percent. Tequila and Irish whiskey, both substantially smaller in volume than vodka and rum, posted impressive gains of 9.4 percent and 17.5 percent, respectively. Losing ground were blended whiskey (down 1.9 percent), Canadian whiskey (down 0.6 percent) and prepared cocktails (down 5 percent).

Among table wines, which account for more than 91 percent of U.S. wine consumption, almost every country exporting to the U.S. showed growth last year, with Italy (up 8.8 percent) and France (up 6.6 percent) leading the way. Australia stayed flat last year, perhaps partly due to the slower growth of Yellow Tail, the leading imported wine in the U.S. Imported table wines grew faster last year (+7.6 percent) versus domestics (+3.1 percent), though domestic wines still dominate the business, with 66.9 percent coming from the U.S.

Craft and light beers were the main bright spots among beers; though imports advanced, it was at a much slower pace than previous years. Among premium, popular, malt liquor, ice and flavored malt beverages, only ice beer grew in 2007. Total beer consumption rose 1.2 percent or 35.7 million cases to 2.93 billion 2.25 gallon cases. Light beers grew 2.5 percent and now represent 51.1 percent of the whole beer market.

Dollar sales outpaced volume sales across all segments in 2007, with on-premise sales up 8.3 percent, and off-premise sales up 5.0 percent. Total sales for 2007 reached $188.7 billion. For more information visit www.bevinfogroup.com.

Pundits' politics polarize their likeability

Rush Limbaugh is one of the least-favorite news and current-affairs personalities, according to a Harris Interactive poll. Forty-two percent of respondents cited the conservative talk show host as someone they are not particularly fond of, while 23 percent say fellow right-wing bloviator Bill O'Reilly earns the same dubious honor. Results also find CNN's Larry King in the bottom three with 19 percent.

Research company Harris Interactive, Rochester, N.Y., conducted a nationwide Harris Poll between January 15 and 22, 2008, surveying online 2,302 U.S. adults aged 18 and over to learn which news and current-affairs personalities top lists of favorite and least-favorite.

Leading the list of favorites, just under one-quarter (23 percent) of Americans cite Fox News Channel's Bill O'Reilly as one of their three favorite news and current-affairs personalities, followed by host of ABC's *World News Tonight* Charles Gibson and CNN's Anderson Cooper (17 percent each).

Rounding out the top five favorite news and current affairs personalities is *NBC Nightly News* anchor Brian Williams (16 percent), and then with 13 percent each is *Meet the Press* host Tim Russert, *CBS Evening News* anchor Katie Couric and former *60 Minutes* correspondent Mike Wallace. On the other side, 17 percent say that Nancy Grace of *CNN Headline News* is one of their least favorites

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names of note

Leonard Bayer, executive vice president and co-founder of Rochester, N.Y., research company *Harris Interactive* has retired.

Germany-based research company *GfK Group* has extended **Gérard Hermet**'s appointment on the management board by five years, until December 31, 2013.

Jonathan Sheldrake has joined research company *Pulse Group*, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, as associate director for Europe in the London office.

Sheldrake Cusick

New York research company *Ziment* has promoted **Jade Cusick** to executive vice president, strategic relationships.

New York research company *Arbitron* has appointed **Taymoor Arshi** as senior vice president and CTO. Separately, vice president of national group services **Rich Tunkel's** responsibilities have been expanded to include radio station services regional manager.

Barry Blyn has been named vice president, consumer insights at *ESPN*, Bristol, Conn.

Stamford, Conn., research firm *Insight Express* has expanded its client service team with the promotions of **Michele McDonald** to director and **Ryan Price** to senior account executive. The company also appointed **Chris George** as director, **Kristen Stonacek** as account manager and **Amy Covey** as director, digital media measurement group.

New York research company *Nielsen Online* has appointed **René Lamsfuss** as senior director of product and methodology for the EMEA region.

Atlanta research group *CMI* has added **Bronwen Clark** as a moderator and **Scott Taylor** as a qualitative field director.

Clark Moore

The Council for Marketing and Opinion Research (CMOR), Glastonbury, Conn., has elected **Jane Moore** as incoming co-chair of the CMOR government affairs committee and **Diane Kosobud** as incoming co-chair of the CMOR board of directors.

Port Washington, N.Y., research company *NPD Group* has named **Michel Maury** group president of NPD Group's European business.

London research company *Opinion Leader* has hired **Carolyn MacLeish** to manage its panel of opinion formers.

Terri Bressi has been named vice president for *Research International Canada*, Toronto.

Chicago research company *Information Resources Inc.* has hired **Thomas E. Peterson** as president of global retail.

Joel Rubinson has joined the *Advertising Research Foundation*, New York, as chief research officer.

Dallas research company *e-Rewards* has appointed **David Clemm** to its board of directors.

NWC Opinion Research, the Asia-Pacific arm of Opinion Research Corporation, Princeton, N.J., has appointed **Joseph Chui** as senior research director.

Eric Grosgogeat has been named CEO of Stamford, Conn., research company *FocusVision*.

Cincinnati research company *Burke Inc.* has promoted **Jim Berling** to senior vice president.

Matt Kleinschmit has joined Menlo Park, Calif., research company *Knowledge Networks* as vice president, client service. He will be based in the company's Chicago office.

Omaha, Neb., research firm *infoUSA* has hired **Andy Taylor** as head of marketing and product development of its new infoUK.com business.

Naperville, Ill., research company *Millward Brown* has made senior appointments to the management board of the newly-formed Millward Brown India: **Shiv Moulee** will lead the Mumbai office and regional marketing solutions for Africa Asia Pacific; **Ritesh Ghosal** will head-up the Delhi office; **Praveen Ramachandra** will oversee the South India operation from a base in Bangalore; and **Pranay Singhvi** will serve as finance director.

Mark Kostelec has joined New York-based research company *Ipsos*'s U.S. media, content and technology division as senior vice president of sales and marketing.

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product and service update

Kinesis rolls out multimode, multilingual survey capabilities

Austin, Texas, research company Kinesis Survey Technologies' Kinesis Survey product now provides full support for multimode (Web/wireless) multilingual projects, including those requiring use of multibyte UTF-8 characters to present all common languages worldwide including Arabic, Korean, Vietnamese, Thai, Chinese and Japanese characters.

Among the new multilingual features are full multilingual support for both Web and wireless or dual-mode surveys; unicode (UTF-8) support; and translation via XML documents.

Translations utilize an XML document format, which is compatible with SDLX and similar translation software commonly used by translators. By maintaining an XML document format, the translation software utilizes translation memory and fully automates translations of similar sentences and phrases, therefore reducing the cost and time needed for translating similar surveys.

The XML document format contains all question texts, button labels, system error messages and other customizable text. The translation document also contains localizable data, such as date format and currency, allowing translations to be done independently from the programmed survey logic and without the need to understand the survey flow. For more information visit www.kinesissurvey.com.

Boston Analytics unveils quantitative marketing research services

Boston-based knowledge services company Boston Analytics has released its new Quantitative Marketing Research (QMR) service that is intended to provide companies greater depth in sector, customer and industry knowledge. Researchers in the U.S. and India will collect, maintain and analyze data about values, demographics and locations of buyers and prospects to help determine optimum pricing, differentiate products from those of competitors and maximize the probability of new product success.

Boston Analytics' QMR service can assist clients in collecting data via the Internet (Web-based surveys, business or household panels), telephone or mail; maintain data using custom-built, time-series or cross-sectional repositories; and analyze the data to gain insights using standard reporting and statistical tools, including tabulation, crosstabs and correlation, as well as more analytical tools like linear and non-linear regression, cluster and latent-class analyses and classification methods.

The new practice will be spearheaded by Murli Rao. For more information visit www.bostonanalytics.com.

Northern Light launches revision of meaning extraction tool

Cambridge, Mass., research company Northern Light has launched its second major release of MI Analyst, an automated "meaning extraction" application designed specifically for market intelligence, market research and product research. By combining free-text searching with advanced text analytics, MI Analyst is intended to improve a researcher's ability to analyze reports from internal and external sources, identifying the strategy issues and suggesting the business implications of the analyzed content.

MI Analyst can be used to analyze news, published syndicated research and specialty databases of particular interest to pharmaceutical research, like patents. MI Analyst reads available news articles as well as all the market intelligence and research reports that a company creates or licenses from third-party sources. The application tells the researcher what is in the documents that are returned by a search query, suggesting what business issues they address, and then directs the researcher to the documents that are most interesting based on their meaning rather than on their statistically-derived search relevance. In addition, MI Analyst can discern the tone of content - for example, assessing which market research reports and research analysts reflect a positive sentiment and which ones demonstrate a negative sentiment about a company and its competitors.

MI Analyst 2.0 adds new facets by which the software can analyze search results, extracting meaning from internal and research documents, licensed secondary research, news stories and Web sources. Joining the previously released facets (companies, venture-funded companies, IT technologies, IT markets), new and expanded facets include government agencies, industries, business issues and strategic scenarios.

Also new in MI Analyst 2.0 is a facility intended to improve the value of search results based on the proximity of specified terms or phrases to each other, and more importantly, to any of the terms in any of the facets in MI Analyst.

MI Analyst expands beyond its roots in the IT sector to the pharmaceutical industry research. New facets relevant to pharmaceuticals include human anatomy, diseases, drugs, cells, cell receptors, proteins, genes, enzymes, pharmaceutical markets, life sciences scenarios and research strategies and therapeutic approaches.

MI Analyst is immediately available from Northern Light as an added-value option for SinglePoint enterprise

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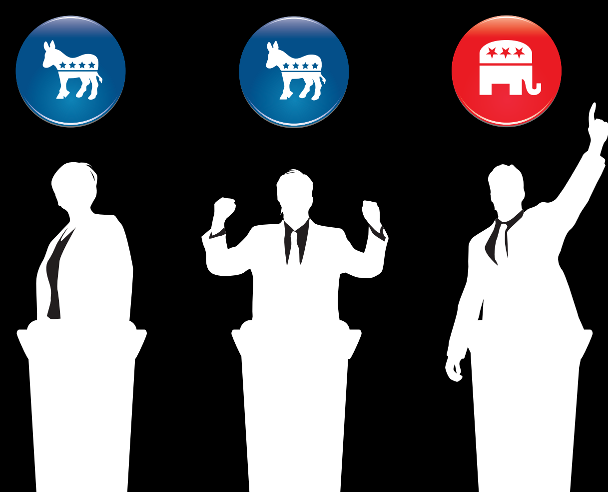
WE KNOW WHO WILL BE THE NEXT PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



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research industry news

News notes

U.S. authorities have charged Chadwick Wilson Young with wire fraud, as reported by the *Knoxville News Sentinel*. Young is accused of defrauding his employer, Knoxville, Tenn., marketing research firm **U30 Group Inc.**, of more than $1.1 million in roughly four years. Young worked as the interactive Internet group manager for U30 and set out to bilk U30 using a series of e-mail accounts that were supposed to belong to customers but instead were his. "He would use his position as an employee for the U30 Group Inc. to fraudulently obtain Amazon.com gift cards at U30 Group Inc. expense and send them to several e-mail accounts that he exercised control over," according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Charles Atchley. "(Young) would then convert the gift cards to his own use by purchasing goods or convert them to cash by selling them to a third party."

Dulles, Va., research company **Vovici** has closed a $10 million series B funding round. The round was led by Menlo Park, Calif., venture capital firm Mayfield Fund with participation from existing company investor Austin Ventures. The funding is intended to better Vovici's position in the enterprise feedback management market.

Waltham, Mass., research company **Invoke Solutions** has received $7 million in funding led by Portland, Maine-based North Atlantic Capital and its existing investors Bain Capital and BEV Capital. The financing comes as Invoke launches its Engage Family of Research Solutions, and Invoke will use the funding to continue developing its enterprise feedback management platform and increase its delivery capabilities.

Peanut Labs, a San Francisco research firm, has received $3.2 million in a series A financing round. The funding is led by venture capital firms Leapfrog Ventures and BV Capital. The $3.2 million cash infusion will be used for continued product development towards Peanut Labs' patent-pending market research sampling technology, which is designed to reach the 13- to 25-year-old demographic, known as Gen Y. The funding will also be used to service Peanut Labs' list of market research clients and enhance the survey-taking experience.

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Calendar of Events May-August

The Council of American Survey Research Organizations will hold a workshop designed for project directors and analysts on May 15-16 in New York. For more information visit www.casro.org.

The American Association for Public Opinion Research will hold its annual conference on May 15-18 at the Sheraton Hotel in New Orleans. For more information visit www.aapor.org.

Canada's Marketing Research and Intelligence Association will hold its annual conference on May 25-28 in Winnipeg. For more information visit www.mria-arim.ca.

ESOMAR will hold WM3, a conference on worldwide multimedia measurement, on June 1-4 in Budapest. For more information visit www.esomar.org.

ESOMAR will hold its world research conference in Copenhagen, Denmark, on June 16-18. For more information visit www.esomar.org.

The Marketing Research Association will hold its annual conference on June 4-6 in New York. For more information visit www.mra-net.org.

IIR will hold its excellence in market research conference, themed "Best Practices for Execution," on June 9-11 at the Westin on Michigan Avenue in Chicago. For more information visit www.iirusa.com.

The Qualitative Research Consultants Association will hold its international seminar on computer-aided qualitative research on June 10-11 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. For more information visit www.qrca.org.

The American Marketing Association will hold its annual advanced research techniques forum on June 15-18 in Asheville, N.C. For more information visit www.marketingpower.com.

LIMRA International Inc. will hold its marketing strategies conference on June 16-19 in Wellesley, Mass. For more information visit www.limra.com.

IIR will hold its return on marketing investment conference on June 23-25 at the Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort & Spa in Bonita Springs, Fla. For more information visit www.iirusa.com.

The Advertising Research Foundation will hold its Audience Measurement 3.0 conference on June 24-25 at the Millennium Broadway Hotel in New York. For more information visit www.thearf.org.

The Conference Board will hold its marketing research conference, themed "Moving Market Research Beyond the Online Virtual World," on June 26-27 at the Hotel Inter-Continental in Chicago. For more information visit www.conference-board.org.

The Council of American Survey Research Organizations will hold its annual technology conference on June 26-27 in New York. For more information visit www.casro.org.

LIMRA International Inc. will hold its multicultural marketing strategies conference on July 8 in Toronto. For more information visit www.limra.com.

The American Marketing Association will hold its summer marketing educators' conference on August 8-11 at the Sheraton San Diego Hotel & Marina in San Diego. For more information visit www.marketingpower.com/research.

To submit information on your upcoming conference or event for possible inclusion in our print and online calendar, e-mail us at editorial@quirks.com. For a more complete list of upcoming events visit www.quirks.com/events.

By Patt Karubus

Learning from the little ones

One of my favorite aspects of qualitative research is conducting studies with kids. I suppose it appeals to the part of me that's never quite grown up. Their spontaneity and lightheartedness is refreshing and contagious, and often counters the hassles of travel delays and long days in the field.

Following is a look at each part of a qualitative study – from planning through execution – including tips designed to help you get the most out of your research with little ones.

Designing/scheduling the research

It's generally better to plan for shortened sessions when involving children.

Most kids find it difficult to stay focused for longer than 90 minutes – even when the topic is engaging and there's lots of interaction.

Also, keep in mind it takes more time to explain instructions and offer directions than it does with adults.

Consider a living-room set-up versus a boardroom look and feel.

An informal setting makes for a more comfortable and less intimidating environment. You're also able to observe rich nonverbal behaviors.

Consider providing kid-friendly furniture, such as beanbags. Remember there's a fine line between creating a warm, welcoming environment and one that's too comfortable. I've never had a child fall asleep during a group but I can imagine it happening!

Learn about school holidays by relying on your facility partners. They'll inform you of days off and norms related to how late you can involve children on school nights.

Plan to feed the kids. Usually we have snacks in the focus group room and offer items before getting started. This gets kids comfortable and wards off distracting hunger pains. Our facility partners know to serve healthy, easy-to-eat snacks – popcorn, pretzels, cheese sticks and apple slices are some favorites.

Food is served in bowls scattered around the room. Remember the spoons – to avoid a lot of little hands in the goodies – and do away with loud plastic wrappers.

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Generally no sweets are offered, especially chocolate. Water and juice are also preferred over soda. A sugar high can turn the most well-mannered child into a little monster.

Creating a screener

I'm a believer in asking all terminating questions of moms or dads – allowing older children to simply make the decision to participate or not. During screener development, avoid putting children in the position of being terminated, which can be disappointing.

Recruiting

I recommend recruiting the number of participants that allows taking all youngsters who show. Recently, I didn't follow this favored practice, resulting in a 10-year-old

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girl being brought to tears because she wasn't selected as a participant. Also, recruit kids based on their grade in school versus age. This better ensures children have comparable social skills and life experiences.

At the facility

I visit the reception area and introduce myself to kids and their parent(s) prior to the start of research. This begins the rapport-building with child respondents. Such a meet-and-greet also helps assure caregivers their youngsters will be safe and well taken care of - especially important when parents are not invited to participate.

Further, I begin to get a feel for the kids, learning about their social skills, ability to articulate and comfort level with strangers and unfamiliar surroundings.

Go into a session expecting nothing and prepared for everything, particularly when working with younger kids.

It's a good thing youngsters do not stifle or edit emotions. It's also a challenging thing. Because social skills are being refined and energy is hard to contain, youngsters do and say things you wouldn't expect to see and hear when conducting a group with socialized adults.

The unmonitored feelings and actions of kids have contributed to many of my fond memories and they've also created difficulties. For example, one youngster became enamored of his revolving chair, to the point it became a major distraction in the room and for clients viewing the session. Before I knew it, other children got into the act and everyone quickly lost focus. Needless to say, there are now no more spinning chairs available to kids in the room.

Tone of respect

Regardless of whether interacting with kids aged 7 or 17, I've learned it's important to set a tone of respect early on. I'll adjust my language, as appropriate, from adult- to kid-friendly while avoiding talking down to them.

As with grown-ups, I involve kids in an environment of UPR - unconditional positive regard. Showing respect and caring helps me maintain control and meet client objectives without being autocratic. Further, voice inflection and tone allow me to gently manage dynamics in the room. My goal is to provide structure without imposing stifling rules.

I make a distinction between school and research when explaining logistics and my role. For example: *"In school, children are learners. Some of your answers are right and others are not. In research, I'm learning while you're teaching. And, everything you say is correct while we're together."*

For the past several years, whenever fitting, I've presented backroom attendees to research participants by reversing lights for a few seconds. When dealing with kid respondents, I also offer an opportunity to approach the mirror and take a peek by cupping their eyes with their hands. Most youngsters take me up on this because it's fun and they're intrigued by who's back there.

Often, I'll ask permission to take digital pictures during research. These images are included in my report to enrich discoveries and give readers a feel and flavor for these young consumers.

Hearts, minds

Qualitative research offers a window into the hearts, minds and souls of consumers. With this in mind - and at the core of all I do when planning children's research - I am reminded how kids are willing to open this window when feeling safe, secure and respected. I suppose it's no different than conducting research with adults. Still, such an emphasis seems even more important when dealing with little ones. By paying attention to the big and small details, your research projects should be successful, gratifying and energizing! | Q

By Michael Lieberman

Knowing the score

The first point I make to apprehensive students at the initial lecture of my basic statistics course is that statistics, when you boil it down, is simply a numerical description of an event. The confusing and scary array of correlations, regressions, ANOVAs and null hypotheses is no more than a collection of techniques to get an idea of what is happening.

Good research is the same. Quality information, professionally gathered and well-presented, provides a clear story with actionable, marketable results that are easily understood by the supplier and the client.

In this article we explore the performance score, a technique that presents information in an easily understood format for use in executive decision-making. We compress data from complex mathematical analyses into one number that can be used to compare performance across an array of attributes. This technique has been applied in the fields of public relations, publishing, advertising, retail, restaurant chains and professional sports.

The performance score is created by a weighted measure of attributes as they relate to a key attribute, such as overall satisfaction with a store or intent to purchase an item. The weights are created by measuring association to the key attribute - the dependent variable.

Let's use a restaurant chain as an example. This chain has regular visits from diners who rate the restaurant on, say, 10 attributes, as well as giving an overall rating. The attribute weights are derived using regression analysis to determine the importance of each attribute relative to overall rating. The importance - or weight - of each independent attribute is called a beta score.

Table 1 is the output from our restaurant chain's regression presenting data compiled from over 20,000 records.

Examining Table 1, we see that meal preparation and quality are the most highly-weighted attributes, which should not be a surprise. Now we want to synthesize these results into one score for the restaurant. We do this by multiplying each beta by the diners' combined overall rating and adding them up. We then combine the score of different restaurants into a grand mean for the chain's restaurants as a whole.

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We now have a score for each restaurant which can be directly compared to the chain's grand mean to easily see each restaurant's relative performance, resulting in a value called the index. This individual restaurant ratings performance index is calculated by dividing a restaurant's score by the grand mean and multi-

Table 1
Restaurant Regression Results

	Beta
Meal Preparation	0.25
Meal Quality	0.22
Host Greeting	0.19
Wait Time Or Seating	0.14
Menu Variety and Interest	0.13
Meal Value	0.12
Rest Rooms Clean	0.12
Tables Clean and Organized	0.12
Appetizer Quality	0.11
Check Service	0.11

Table 2				
Restaurant	**Restaurant Score**	**Grand Mean**	**Index**	**Percentile**
New Orleans	145.59	118.17	123	100
San Antonio	133.34	118.17	113	96
Atlanta	132.75	118.17	112	93
Key West	132.29	118.17	112	89
Miami	114.25	118.17	97	44
Denver	111.66	118.17	94	33
Memphis	102.01	118.17	86	11

plying it by 100.

In Table 2, a comparison of restaurant ratings performances, a look at Key West's index shows that it is doing better than average with an index of 112.

To then calculate percentiles, the restaurants in the sample are sorted highest to lowest, and the top restaurant is given 100 and the bottom one is given a 0; the percentiles are then calculated for the ones in between. The percentile shows, at a glance, the relative position of a given restaurant. The percentile is particularly useful if the sample has tightly bunched scores, producing indexes that are similar.

Interpreting the percentile is straightforward. Miami has a percentile of 44, which means that 43 percent of the restaurants have lower scores, and 56 percent scored higher. I would say the manager of the Miami branch is not pleased.

This comparison system can be applied to any unit of choice such as market, state or region.

Application: publishing

There is a snap, crackle and pop formula to selling magazines. Cover choices are often determined by focus groups, though quantitative methods are becoming increasingly relevant. In fact, we have found that applying the performance score method gives a quick and easy winner when an editor wants to know which of, say, four covers to go with.

As an example, the performance score can be determined through an online survey which shows a magazine cover, then asks the invited participant to rate each of the factors (shown in Table 3), then give an overall score. Or, consumer views can be gathered through mall intercepts, where individuals in the target groups (e.g., twentysomething professional women) are shown a magazine cover. While an eye-tracking device measures the respondent's eye movements, the participant is asked to rate each cover on a scale, say 1-to-7.

This technique is most effective when the results are applied to an analytical model derived from historical data - a publisher's database containing measurements from publications over a specified time period. The model can then be applied as needed.

Table 3 shows the regression results of the historical model. The model gives us both descriptive results - we know that the photo and article content are the most persuasive - and the publisher now has the ability to easily analyze data comparing potential covers. Table 4 shows the index scores for several tested covers.

Table 3 Cover Eye-Tracking Results	
	Beta
Photo	0.49
Article Content	0.37
Background Cover Color	0.25
Tagline	0.22
Print Size	0.14
Font	0.13

Table 4 Index - Test Covers	
	Index
Lives of the Rich and Infamous - Photo 2	113
Red Shadows, Green Hearts - Photo 2	107
Lives of the Rich and Infamous - Photo 1	99
Back Roads - Chile - Photo 2	99
Back Roads - Chile - Photo 1	90
Red Shadows, Green Hearts - Photo 1	87

Which cover will the editor go with? Table 4 gives the answer: "Lives of the Rich and Infamous," using photo two.

Application: retail

A major national retailer has a database of millions of customer surveys. These are fairly extensive, ranging across different sections of the store. The retailer (we'll call it WorldMart) wants to benefit from this wealth of information.

Again the first step is the model. In this database WorldMart has cases where a given customer has rated cosmetics, another the pharmacy and others the menswear department. Within each category there is an overall score. Each respondent also rated their visit and the likelihood of returning to this store.

The regressions were run, accounting for the differences among the departments such as the greater frequency of visits to the pharmacy.

WorldMart requested modified output in order to assess units within its empire on different levels. It wanted a universal number that could be calculated as needed. We provided the ability to calculate a percentile for each filter, department and manager.

The equation is:

[[Tested Store Score-Minimum Store Score]/[Maximum Store Score-Minimum Store Score] multiplied by 100.

In this equation the maximum WorldMart score was 132, the minimum 88, and the store we are looking at 112.

((112-88)/(132-88))100=54.55, or 55

Table 5
Georgia Cosmetics

	Percentile
Athens West	87
Savannah Towne Center	82
Macon	75
Atlanta Airport	52
Waycross Junction	37
Sandy Springs	26

Table 6
Regional Pharmacy

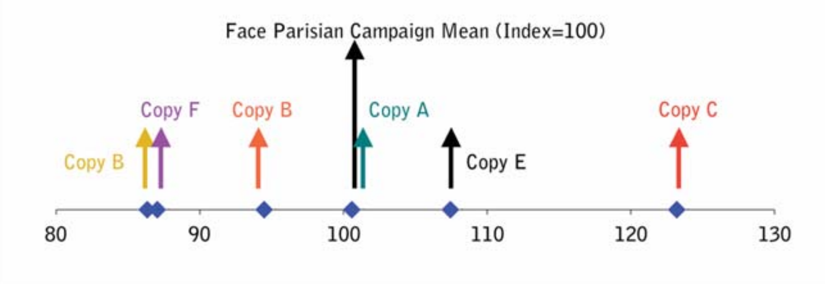
	Percentile
Upper Midwest	91
New England	76
Alaska and Hawaii	61
New York and New Jersey	52
Four Corners and Nevada	31
Detroit Metro	22

Table 7 Smith Managers Menswear	
	Percentile
Potter	55
Montgomery	51
Schwartz	44
Patton-Stein	40
Vase	20
Fleener	19

The benefit of this approach is that it allows WorldMart to shine a spotlight exactly where it wishes. Table 5 shows the output of a request for cosmetic store performance in one state. Table 6 shows pharmacy performance by region. And Table 7 shows performance by regional manager.

Overall, Smith is not doing too well. He is going to have to sit on some staff to improve customer service or his head might roll. Smith's best manager, Potter, is only just above average. Managers Vase and Fleener had better improve their numbers or update their resumes.

Figure 1: Face Parisian Long-Lasting Lipstick



Application: advertising

The performance score can be further simplified by creating a visual presentation. This is effective when presenting performance score results to senior management or pitching to a potential client.

After a two-day mall intercept in Las Vegas, the McMann-Bronfman advertising agency is presenting the results to product managers at cosmetics firm Face Parisian. Rather than present detailed multivariate analysis, the ad agency is able to present a clear summary chart, as shown in Figure 1. I think the Face Parisian team will go with Copy C.

See and compare

Decision-makers are interested in utilizing sophisticated data analysis to improve their market position. Our system gives managers with diverse backgrounds the ability to see and compare relevant information. It is cost-effective, has wide application and provides findings in a simple, graphical presentation, making it a valuable measurement tool. | Q

>

name research

By John Hoeppner

It sells the product by itself

Samuel Clemens, aka Mark Twain, had a unique appreciation for the power and influence of language. He said, "The difference between the almost right word and the right word is the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning." In today's over-communicated global economy, effective verbal brand communication that is achieved through name research is not just important, it is critical.

Before market researchers assume responsibility for any U.S. or international name research initiative, they should have a clear understanding of what name research can do for their organization. Because name research is a comparatively new category in marketing services, this science is still somewhat undefined and often misunderstood. Perhaps the definition of name research is somewhat fuzzy due to an individual's perspective, position and frequency of use.

Insights into name research

Name research is simply finding the best name for a specific product. At a speaking engagement for the International Trademark Association's Strategy Forum in New York I explained the overall objective of name research to an audience of trademark attorneys this way: "The goal of effective name research is to choose a product name that reflects and fits the customer's needs so precisely that the name sells the product."

Editor's note: John Hoeppner is president and CEO of NameQuest Inc., a Carefree, Ariz., branding consulting firm. He can be reached at 480-488-9660 or at jphoeppner@namequest.com.

This article will help you understand how to integrate name research into your organization's marketing strategy. To start with, name research may include parts of any one or all of the following functions:

- point-of-origin for name research project;
- the construction and coordination of a name research brief;
- directing activities for the verbal brand name development;
- foreign-language name research and analysis;
- trademark research coordination;
- marketing research and analysis.

There are three branding components that may be part of your marketing task. However, they are not part of the name research discipline and will only confuse, distract and dilute the name research part of your task. They are: 1) package or trade dress design; 2) logo design or typeface; and 3) tagline or strapline. These visual branding components should be dealt with only after you select your verbal brand name. When completed in the correct sequence, visual branding will add value to your company's new product initiative.

Begin with a need

All name research initiatives begin with a need. The need for name research may spring up in product development, brand management, market research, advertising, marketing management, legal or even in the executive suite. (A few years ago I was surprised early one Saturday morning when I was contacted at home by an executive from a leading automobile manufacturer, regarding an immediate need to rebrand a vehicle.) Each of these functions within an organization may have its own ideas about how to define name research.

In order to better grasp the meaning of name research, one must first comprehend the distinctions between brand, visual brand and verbal brand. Having a clear understanding of these distinctions will assist in delineating the scope of your name research work.

Brand: Simply, a brand dwells within the part of the human mind that perceives a product's intangible benefits differentiating an otherwise readily substitutable product in a highly customer-relevant way.

Visual brand: A visual brand includes trademarks, such as logos, packaging and trade dress.

Verbal brand: A verbal brand is the name, the language or words used to express your product idea to your customer.

It is important for companies and/or their consultants not to get too far out front in the process of

verbal brand name development and research. First, you need to consider whether your name research assignment requires a brand equity study, package optimization or verbal branding. Each of these missions requires specific expertise and experience. Matching your needs with the correct provider will go a long way towards assuring a timely and successful outcome.

A Google search of "branding company" nets 373,000 hits. Often, consulting groups that refer to their organization as a branding company stretch the definition of name research to match their internal product offerings. Because of the relatively low frequency of branding projects in some companies and the expertise required, the majority of branding work is outsourced. It is important to understand your internal needs and match those needs with the specific expertise that's required in the proper sequence.

Clearly communicate

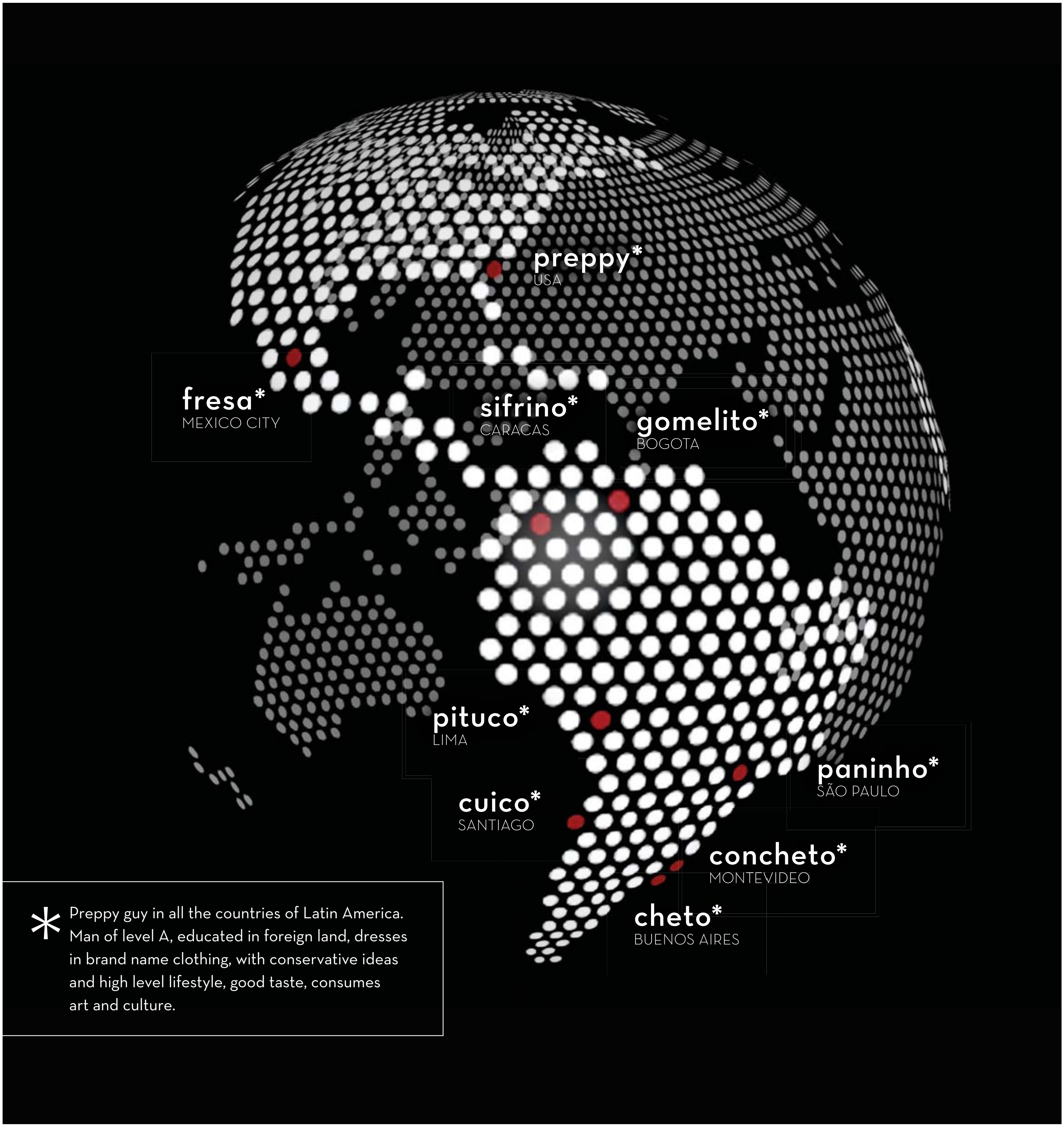
A key requirement for a name research brief is to clearly communicate the project's scope, geography and scheduling objectives. These prerequisites return us to the meanings of brand, visual brand and verbal brand. Is the project a study of an existing brand? Is your company a multi-brand marketer that is consolidating, eliminating or optimizing an existing brand? Or is the task at hand to update the visual brand with a new logo, packaging or trade dress? Has your company innovated a new product that requires a new verbal brand or extended a product line that requires a new verbal sub-brand?

What is the realistic geographical marketing potential of your brand? The product brand team may have global aspirations; however, down-to-earth financial realities may suggest a more focused strategy. Setting geographic objectives will provide guidelines for name development, foreign-language interpretations, trademark ownership, market research and project scheduling.

Constructing a brief that precisely defines the project's scope and geography will effectively lay the foundation for long-term success. Additionally, you must determine which parts of the project will be carried out internally and which tasks need to be performed by consultants. Budgeting and scheduling are integral to making a name research project run smoothly.

Historical perspective

Assuming that directing a verbal brand naming project is a part of your name research project, it helps to understand verbal branding from a historical perspective. From the 1950s to the 1980s verbal branding was, more often than not, an afterthought. Advertising in the mass media, primarily on network television, was the driving brand-building strategy for the mass market. Product, service and company names typically originated within companies and were created by product developers, sales, marketing, executive management and even corporate founders.



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Outside the corporate domain, advertising agencies may have direct input to the process. Just about any verbal brand name would have succeeded during this era. Remember Hydrox cookies?

Then something changed. It is what I have referred to in industry speeches as a "disruption in the traditional marketing four-Ps model." From 1980 to the present day, the following four marketing disruptions have occurred.

Product - choice explosion
1980: The average store had 5,000 products.
2008: A Wal-Mart SuperCenter has 150,000 products.

Place - channel consolidation
1980: There were hundreds of local and regional retailers.
2008: Wal-Mart sells almost 25 percent of Procter & Gamble's total volume. Others such as Kroger, Amazon, LensCrafters and Home Depot are consolidators in their respective markets.

Promotion - media fragmentation
1980: Three major television networks (ABC, NBC and CBS) have the controlling market share. A frequency of three television commercials has an 80 percent reach. Today it takes a frequency of 100 commercials to reach the same audience.
2008: The Internet, hundreds of cable channels and interactive media dominate the shrinking audiences of network television and large city newspapers.

Price - commodity/private-label
1980: Pricing was a tactic, e.g., auto rebates.
2008: Pricing is a strategy. The new Tata Nano automobile from India is three meters long, seats four comfortably, does 65 m.p.h., gets 50 miles per gallon and is the same price as the DVD player in a Lexus.

The disruption in the traditional marketing model has transformed the task of verbal brand naming from afterthought to forethought, increasing both its priority and difficulty.

If a verbal brand name is the foundation on which your brand's business will be built, what are the communication building blocks that will provide support? Certainly, perceived differentiation, memorability and purchase intent should be mandatory. Additionally, salient product attributes should be included and later utilized as independent variables as a part of the market research analysis.

The verbal brand name is the only clear, identifiable aspect of the product that your customer uses in selection and purchase.

All brands are global

Today, all brands are global in the wired and wireless world of Internet communications. Your company's branded products are easily accessible worldwide, even if your company is primarily a domestic marketer. Right now you can go to Amazon.com and order HobNobs, a popular milk chocolate candy from the U.K., or find Japanese Hello Panda biscuits for sale. Consider that an eBay shopper in Venice, Italy, sees basically the same screen as someone logging in from Venice, Calif. The verbal brand name is the same, only the language is different.

Remember that one of the key components of the brief is to define geography. If your marketing area is

defined as the U.S., North America, Europe or Asia, foreign-language name research and analysis is critical. Misinterpretation or implied negativity can lead to an embarrassing failure and retreat from the marketplace.

A commonly-cited naming *faux pas* is the textbook case of Chevrolet's Nova introduction in South America. Although there is some controversy regarding the name's impact, if any, on Latin American sales, the name "no va," if pronounced as such, can mean "it won't go."

The Coca-Cola brand was introduced to China as Ke-ke-ken-la. Imagine the shocker when Coca-Cola's printed signs translated to "bite the wax tadpole" or "female horse stuffed with wax," depending on the dialect. After researching 40,000 Chinese characters that could be a phonetic equivalent, Coca-Cola brand managers settled on, "ko-kou-ko-le," which can be loosely translated as "happiness in the mouth."

Perhaps the most astonishing conversation I have had regarding foreign-language translations was with Sigvaid Baerentzen from the Water-Pik–Neodent Company in Denmark. In the Danish language, the translation for "pik" is male genitals. "Water" translates to "vand." Thus the translation is "Vandpik" or Danish slang for morning erection. When I asked Baerentzen why they did not modify the name WaterPik for his country, he told me, "The greatest advantage is that dentists and consumers do not forget the name when they have heard it only one time."

Some of our firm's recent foreign-language name research and analysis has resulted in veering away from an array of names. Verbal brand names that were suitable for North American markets held the potential for global misfire. A few examples include a verbal brand name in Hebrew that sounded too similar to a baby food in Israel that had recently been linked to infant deaths and illnesses; a name for Arabic-speaking markets that sounded too Jewish; another that translated in Hindi to "devil" or "demon;" one in French that had an association with "nudity" or "naked;" and a German name for a service-related product that translated to "complaint."

There are essentially five choices when considering your global linguistic strategy:

1. Enter the market with the country of origin verbal brand name.
2. Phonetically-translated verbal brand name.
3. Directly-translated verbal brand name.
4. Combination of original verbal brand name and phonetic translation.
5. Combination of original verbal brand name and direct translation.

From a cultural perspective, consumers by and large prefer "home-grown" or domestic verbal brand names. In major markets with large GDPs such as the U.S., U.K., Germany and Japan, the appeal of national verbal brands is exceptionally strong. However, global brands are very acceptable within certain categories of products.

Consumer electronics from Asia, including products marketed by Sony, Samsung and Panasonic, are flourishing globally. German performance auto brands Mercedes and BMW, and U.S. motorcycle marketer Harley-Davidson are strong global players. At the same time that Japan's Toyota has achieved market share in the U.S., Korean automakers Hyundai and Kia find the U.S. market difficult to penetrate. NameQuest research indicates that Hyundai is perceived as too foreign and as having quality issues, and KIA is a U.S. military acronym for "killed in action." Because of the ongoing U.S. military presence in Korea and potential for a nuclear confrontation in the North, the Kia brand and potential "killed in action" negative associations may be problematic.

Identify and distinguish

The term "trademark" is often used interchangeably to identify a trademark or service mark. A trademark

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is defined by the International Trademark Association as any word (Poison), name (Giorgio Armani), symbol or device (the Pillsbury Doughboy), slogan ("Got Milk?"), package design (Coca-Cola bottle) or combination of these that serves to identify and distinguish a specific product from others in the marketplace or in trade. Even a sound (NBC's chimes), color combination, smell or hologram can be a trademark under some circumstances.

Each day in the U.S., the average consumer will come into contact with about 1,500 trademarked products. If that consumer goes to the supermarket, the trademark contacts increase to 35,000. A trademark as an intangible asset may have more intrinsic value than a company's physical plant. What is more valuable: the ownership of the Coca-Cola trademark or the ownership of the bottling plants?

Five reasons why trademarks are important:

1. They add shareholder value.
2. They differentiate your product.
3. They define your territory.
4. They are your sign of continuity.
5. Patents expire, copyrights run their course, but trademarks last forever.

Because the ownership of a trademark creates value for your organization, it is vitally important that your legal team or trademark attorney be involved in the process. The verbal brand name development generally works within the realm of marketing terms. From a legal perspective, your trademark attorney will scrutinize your names with variations of what I refer to as the naming spectrum:

1. Fanciful/neologisms - "invented" names
Advantage: strong legal protection
Disadvantage: Cost of educating the public

2. Associative - indirect communication
Advantage: communicates message plus legal protection
Disadvantage: public needs some education - may confuse

3. Descriptive - communicates directly
Advantage: immediate communication to the customer
Disadvantage: may be less distinctive and less protectable

Because the Internet has attained a predominant place on the media landscape, securing a .com domain name plays a significant role as a part of your brand's intellectual property portfolio. Trademarks provide a basis for businesses to effectively exploit the Internet as a communications tool. Your trademark can provide your customers with a top-of-mind Internet address as a means to research you company and its products and services.

The World Intellectual Property Organization in Geneva, Switzerland, provides annual reporting regarding the international trademark activities of the 81 Madrid Union member nations. Global trademark registrations were up 9.5 percent in 2007. Companies based in Germany, France and the U.S. were the leading nations in filing for registrations.

Today, consumers in developed countries everywhere are confused by the sheer number of product and service choices. Take an infrequently purchased service such as health care. If today you had to buy a new health insurance policy, what company would you choose? Therefore, your service or product name must communicate verbally. But how will you know if you made the right choice in selecting a verbal brand name? Ask your customer.

Somewhat risky

One of the most astonishing discoveries I made in the early years at NameQuest was that nearly all of the Fortune 500 corporations I encountered did not conduct any validated market research on verbal brand names. Given that many of these organizations invested significant sums on new product launches, it seemed somewhat risky to me to move forward without testing the viability of the product's name.

The primary objective of testing verbal brand name candidates is to determine the name(s) that will most effectively sell your product. For your name research to be unbiased and to provide reliable and actionable results, do not include a name test component with another research assignment. This is especially important in a focus group setting. For example, on one occasion I was behind the glass watching a client's focus group in San Francisco. The group's primary task was to evaluate a new food product. After a wide-ranging discussion and taste tests, near the end of session participants were asked to evaluate product names. After discussing a couple of name choices, the group became visibly enthusiastic about the third name. The contingent from the company and its advertising agency stood up, applauded, gave some high-fives and made a decision. The problem here was that this verbal brand naming decision was emotional not rational.

High priority

As a market researcher, removing the internal emotional decision-making aspect should be a high priority. The best method of mitigating partiality is to look at a quantitative solution. Quantitative research that provides more than a visceral understanding of the verbal brand names will assist in making a rational determination. A research instrument designed to capture salient marketing intelligence such as memorability, fit-to-concept, pronounce-ability and purchase intent can provide management with actionable information.

The role of name research in the global economy will continue to grow in importance. The competition for your new products today may not be your true competition. The biggest challenge for your new product may be competing for the attention of your customer. Having an insight into name research will help. | Q

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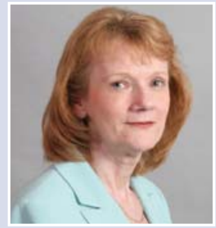

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name research

What's in a name? Plenty.

By Brett Miller and
Oliver Pangborn

A workbench. A desk. A sofa. On their merits alone, these three products have nothing inherently funny about them. Of course, when Ikea names them Fartfull, Jerker and Lessebo, respectively, you can expect your average third-grader (heck, maybe even your average CEO) to let out a few giggles. Needless to say, none of these products are sold under those names in the United States anymore.

Ikea is just one example in a long list of many companies that have neglected to use a formalized naming process. Marketing history is littered with thousands of similar naming blunders that have resulted from either running with one "creative" idea or not taking the consumer perspective into account. We might chuckle at a few of these stories from time to time, but of course, when it's your product and reputation (as well as millions of dollars in R&D and marketing) at stake, it can quickly become a tragedy of Shakespearean proportions.

Bad names don't just hurt. They downright kill. Drawing from our earlier example, Ikea maintains founder Ingvar Kamprad's simple tradition of using Scandinavian names and words for its products. Unfortunately, Scandinavian words don't always translate well into a foreign culture or language. The aforementioned Fartfull[1] (Swedish for "speedy") workbench is just one example. Another more infamous Ikea blunder is the Gutvik. Named after a small Norwegian town, the Gutvik children's bed was a little unsettling for German consumers and quickly pulled from the market, perhaps because in German, *gutvik* sounds awfully close to "good shag"[2]? (And that's putting it politely, mind you.)

Would a Fartfull by any other name smell as sweet?

A good name doesn't just talk the talk. It walks the walk. Look at the Motorola RAZR. Actually, better yet, don't look at it. Listen to its name. Just from sounding out the word "razor," the words "sleek," "light" and "cutting-edge" probably popped into your head right away without even thinking about cell phones. After all, those three qualities are intrinsic to the word itself. Perhaps that was what Motorola marketers were counting on when they introduced the phone in 2004 before it became one of the bestselling cell phones of all time[3].

A good name does a lot of heavy lifting for your product, communicating to consumers on both a functional and emotional level. It also communicates on a constant basis; after all it's the one thing that

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remains the same from launch to advertising to merchandising to purchase to word-of-mouth buzz. RAZR is memorable, ownable and descriptive. It struck a chord with consumers on both an emotional (feeling hip and cool) and functional (thin and portable) level, which is paramount to new product success.

Do you think the "Motorola R720 v3" would've had produced the same buzz? We didn't think so.

Formalized process

Names aren't born. Names are made. Companies that are known as innovators often have a formalized stage-gate innovation process for developing new products. Unfortunately, name generation doesn't always have its own stage within that process. Sometimes it's mistakenly assumed to be part of one or more of the other stages (usually ideation or concept development), and the name is highlighted too late in the process when it needs to go to the legal department. This can lead to a number of potential pitfalls:

1. No names with real potential are generated during the process with a "we'll get to it later" mindset.
2. Concepts are tested with "working titles" that aren't necessarily reflective of their attributes.
3. Legal deadlines start to approach and names are furiously generated internally or by an outside agency.

To avoid these pitfalls, give name generation its own stage in the process. This will eliminate any assumptions that are being made and will ensure that ample time, resources and energy are spent on developing the right name for the product or service.

Be at the heart

Consumer insights should be at the heart of all innovation, especially naming. Without them you run the risk of having creativity for creativity's sake and not creativity that builds business. This mistake can often result in really "cool" names that don't help drive consumer excitement and purchase, or worse, cool names that offend consumers.

Insights don't just appear; they come as a result of careful observation collection. You need to watch, talk and listen to consumers, searching for even the most minute observations. There are many methodologies that can help you do this, including self-reported homework assignments, ethnographic approaches and traditional focus groups.

Your insights depend upon careful analysis of these inputs. Common themes are identified and are then used to create multiple insight statements. From this set of statements, the most promising ones are selected based on which discoveries are most likely to create growth. Their potential can be gauged based on expert opinion or can be qualitatively and/or quantitatively tested with consumers. Insights that emerge become the foundation for name generation.

Look back at the RAZR example. Without even knowing how they developed it, we can already get a sense for the consumer insights that were utilized to develop the name. Consumers need their phones to be as portable as possible because they are on the go. Consumers want their phones to look cool and be stylish because it makes them feel hip and up-to-date. Consumers like to talk about technology and like names that are catchy and can be used easily in conversation. Written language today contains a lot of abbreviated words because consumers need to communicate in a fast and efficient way. It becomes clear how insights like these can lead to that "aha" moment when you realize you have generated a great name.

Many perspectives

It is important when generating names to include many perspectives. You should develop a cross-func-

tional team including as many facets of the business as possible, from brand management to marketing to R&D. It is tempting to think you can do it alone, but no matter how creative you are, what your title is or how many names you have developed in your career, you are risking a lot for simply being able to say, "I came up with that." In fact, you may end up with a name that you would rather not have associated with you.

Maybe additional perspectives during the Ikea naming process would've spared the company plenty, if not all, of the embarrassment endured during some of their aforementioned fiascos. Despite having over a dozen designers on staff and 80 freelancers, Ikea has only one person - the *sortimentssekretarare* ("secretary of the product range")[4] - responsible for naming products. This person manages an entire database of all of the used and available names and product descriptions for Ikea's 28,500 products and product lines, with an additional 7,500 more handy[5]. Granted, hindsight is 20/20, but perhaps a quick check with other colleagues could've prevented the Fartfull and Gutvik incidents.

Improve the chances

Consumer involvement throughout the naming process will improve the chances of developing a great name to drive brands in the marketplace.

On the front end, consider having a panel of consumers involved in the naming process. There are many ways to do this, such as setting up a naming blog or having consumers who are experienced in creative problem-solving and ideation help develop them in a facilitated session.

On the back end, test the names with consumers qualitatively and/or quantitatively. This will help narrow down the list of names to the ones that resonate best with consumers.

Global perspective

Wherever you are, don't forget about the rest of the world. From insight to name creation to evaluation, it is important to get a global perspective on the name if it will be marketed in multiple countries. For example, Honda suffered an Ikea-like embarrassment when it introduced the Honda Fitta to the European market. Previously known as the Fit in Asia and North America, the automaker rechristened it Fitta for the European market, painfully unaware that *fitta* was crude Scandinavian slang for the female anatomy[6].

Even more painful was its accompanying tagline: "Small on the outside, but large on the inside."[7]

Honda immediately rebranded it the Jazz, sparing both itself from further marketing embarrassment and grateful Scandinavian car salesmen from awkward test-drive conversations ("So, um, how'd she handle?").

There are many ways to efficiently get a global view. It can be as simple as tapping into your own distribution network via e-mail. It can be utilizing one of your marketing, advertising or research agencies' global networks. You can also

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Remember the Bard

Lastly, remember the Bard when creating a name. In his famous lines from *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare was probably trying to tell us that a name shouldn't matter, but let's face facts, *Romeo and Juliet* ended with both star-crossed lovers dead – a distinct possibility for any new product with a poorly-chosen name. So take Shakespeare's real marketing message to heart: pay great attention to the naming process or you may suffer like a Montague and a Capulet – or worse, a Fartfull and a Jerker. | Q

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name research

Guidelines for success

By James Murphy

Tips on testing branding concepts, product names, slogans and ad copy

New products, new advertising campaigns, new and relaunched brands, and new corporate and institutional entities require consumer research to support decisions affecting their marketing communications programs. Researchers play a vital role in this process through the design and implementation of studies yielding results that lead to effective communications strategies. What follows are guidelines for the design and conduct of such studies that this researcher feels are crucial to their success.

1. Understand the challenge.

What branding concepts, product names, slogans and ad copy have in common is they are not the physical product or service itself. It is easy to ask people if they prefer a four-ounce hamburger or a six-ounce one. They can answer from memory or we can give them samples. We can learn who prefers which and in what proportions. Consumers are comfortable telling us about their purchasing habits when the determinants are objective criteria, including convenience and value, that allow them to sound rational. Branding and similar strategic tasks for the marketer take the respondent into a different realm, however.

Our question is usually, "Would you buy this?" And it is asked after having presented a characterization of the product or service. The answers that respondents give to our question are often affected by assumptions they make about the characterization. For example, is it: a quote from a reputable, objective, third party; a statement associated with the sponsor which itself has some level of credibility (high or low); or a claim lacking either of the above?

The more the characterization is viewed by respondents as "just advertising," the more they will lower their reported likelihood of purchase in order to avoid making themselves appear to be overly impressionable, credulous or naïve. The content validity (truthfulness) of advertising copy is discounted by consumers because in their eyes it's "just advertising." That's why so much ad copy employs high-credibility endorsers, third-party endorsers or otherwise attempts to present its argument with enough factual backup that the reader can discount the claim only at the cost of living with awareness that he is now call-

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ing the advertiser a liar.

Any exercise in this area must be packaged in a manner that is realistic to respondents and therefore allows them to unselfconsciously reveal the expectations they would have about a product described this way or that way, along with the reasons for those expectations.

2. Understand the roles of qualitative vs. quantitative methods.

Qualitative studies - focus groups and individual interviews - yield insights into the hows and whys of consumer behavior, and the likely consequences of alternative strategies. They are diagnostic and exploratory in nature. Quantitative studies (surveys) address the impact of strategies already in place or contemplated. Which execution is more persuasive? Which types of consumers prefer Logo A over Logo B? Important conclusions developed from numerical results of qualitative research that is being used for marketing decisions may need confirmation in subsequent quantitative research using larger and demographically-projectable respondent samples. Conversely, qualitative research is often used to expand our understanding of factors responsible for a pattern of findings in a survey.

3. Get buy-in from all stakeholders, including client, agency writers and designers, and agency account management.

Agree on what kinds of learning can be expected from the effort as well as what kinds of conclusions are not realistic to expect.

4. Encourage observation by those responsible for acting on the findings.

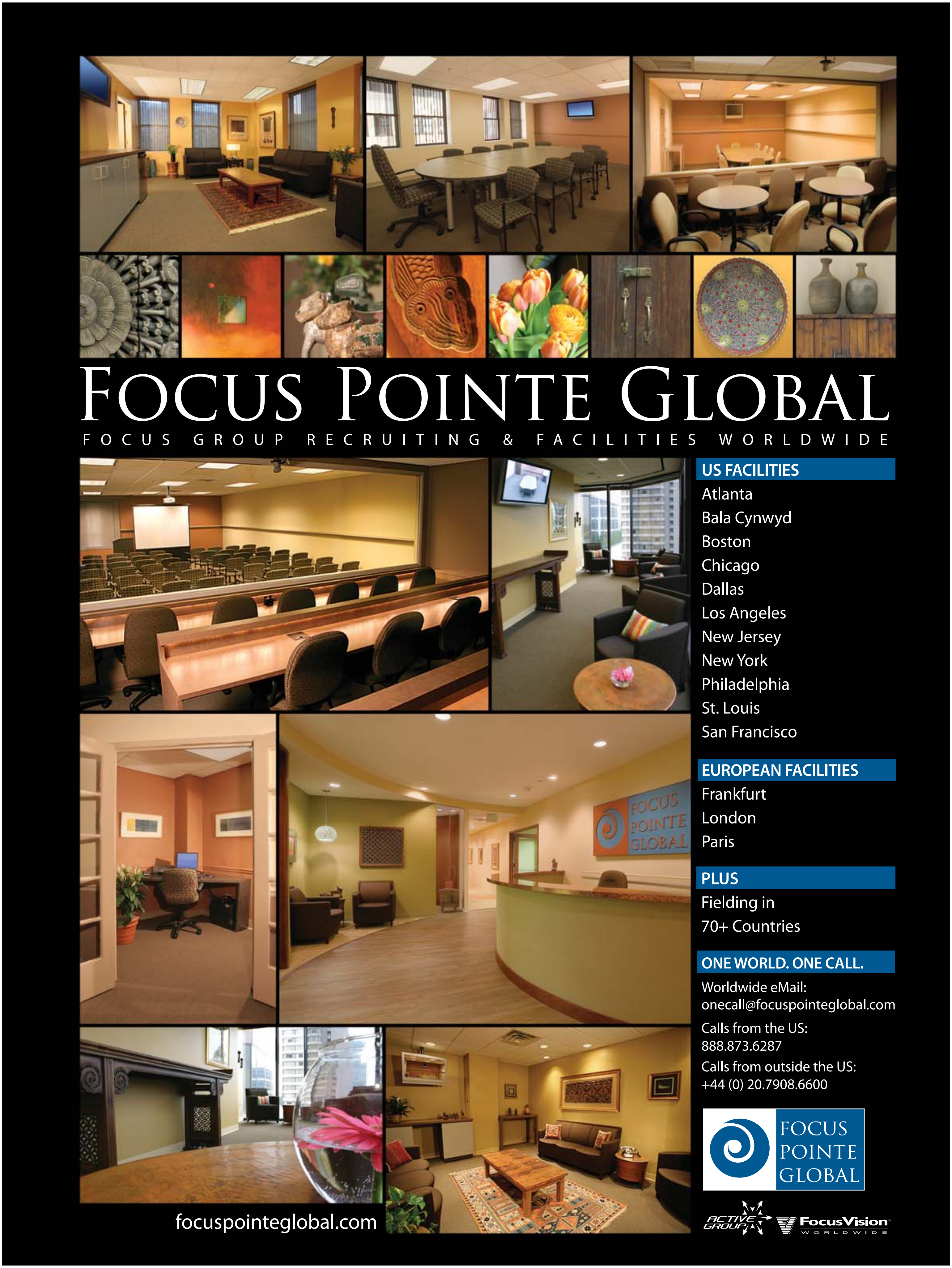
Having observers at focus groups, for example, strengthens the credibility of conclusions presented to senior management and others who were not present. It gives everybody the same frame of reference. There is a better-informed and more challenging audience to whom the researcher must present and defend the conclusions.

5. Test a control.

New material is usually seen as unique and the impulse is to evaluate it on its own terms. When we learn that 60 percent said "definitely would buy," we feel good. But should we? The best way to answer that question - even in focus groups - is to replicate the procedure with existing material of known effectiveness. If the control scored 40 and we reach 60 with a new execution, we know we have a strong concept. Only this type of yardstick can tell us that. (Note: Test and control materials should be presented in equivalent formats and in some situations it may be necessary to adjust for the fact that respondents are already familiar with the control.)

6. Use consumer language.

An execution is presented and the moderator asks, "How do you feel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about this?" Someone behind the mirror mutters, "Jim, I don't care how she feels about it. I want to know if she will buy it!" What this observer fails to appreciate is that if the respondent had been asked that question, she would feel insulted. "I don't spend my money on the basis of cartoons somebody shows me in a focus group!" Instead, oblique and non-specific queries will encourage respondents to reveal their true feelings. Skillfully interpreted – with attention to tone, body language and facial expression, as well as the actual words – the answers to these types of probes will give us the most useful direction.

7. Decompose copy into semantic vs. emotional components.

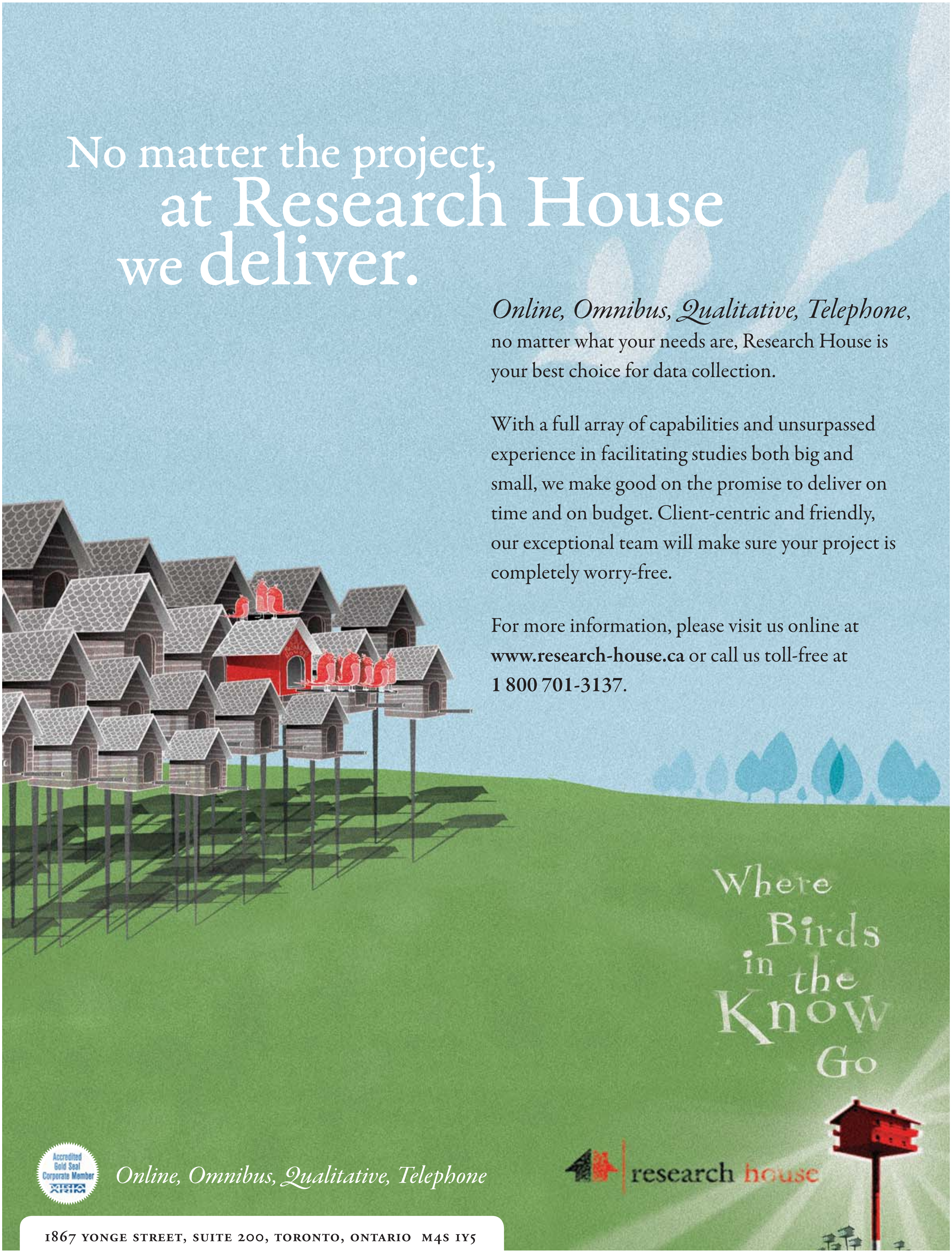
This applies to testing names and slogans in particular. Although consumers respond to stimuli holistically, their reactions in most cases are a joint function of semantic (verbiage) and emotional (executional) dimensions. Thus we test the name or line in plain type first – before showing it in finished executions. If a word has negative or confusing connotations, those attributes will not be totally neutralized by an execution. If we are testing "verizon," we are going to learn more about its similarity to "horizon" or "veracity," its sensory connotation ("eyes') or maybe even feelings people have about the letters "v" and "z," by testing it in plain type. This learning will open doors to additional execution possibilities. If we present the stylized name first, we are less likely to uncover these fundamentals.

8. Tolerate respondents who nit-pick.

We know the difference between concept and execution. Most (but not all) of our testing is against concepts. Focus group observers are frustrated by respondents who ask, "Why is she wearing glasses?" or simply say, "I don't care for this typestyle." But consumers see our materials holistically – no matter how many times we ask them to concentrate on the concept. If we scold them, we impair their identification with the task and make them think we only want to manipulate them. We must tolerate a certain amount of this. The risk of having respondents lose rapport and task identification is too great.

9. Use tangible individual props.

Creatives sometimes feel that the large concept board or package design that worked well in client presentations will be effective in focus groups. Not true. Whenever possible, give respondents their own personal copies of materials, even if it means a reduction in production values. More generally, physical props produce associations and deeper insights. A well-chosen map, a collage of competitive ads, a sampling of category products – just to look at – will stimulate productive discussion.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When presenting materials for discussion, show, don't tell.

10. Don't ask unanswerable questions.

My favorite is: "Jim, just ask them what do we have to do to get their business." This sounds like a simple request, one that cuts through layers of probing and inquiry and gets right to the heart of the issue - for the marketing manager, that is. The problem is it is not a question consumers can answer or care to answer. Too many assumptions are required. Plus, it's offensive. It tells respondents we do not really care about them except as marketplace actors whose inner workings can be decoded and then exploited. And we actually ask them to help with the decoding! Knowing that the answer to a question will be helpful to decision makers is a necessary but not a sufficient factor in drafting the interview protocol. We must also know that a question is something respondents can address without offense to their dignity.

11. Anticipate "opinion leader" respondents in focus groups.

Although everyone in a focus group has the capacity for contribution, the discussions are often lopsided, with a small number of dominant participants. This is one of the main reasons for growth of individual depth interview studies over the past decade. If the potential for, and downsides of, opinion-leading are too high, one-on-one interviews may be a sound alternative. Another strategy in focus groups is having respondents answer key questions privately and in writing in advance of open discussion. This eliminates the potential for them to give conforming answers and it creates an opportunity for a "poll the group" procedure in which each person presents and explains his or her position. This lets commonalities of reactions surface objectively and it corrects any unbalanced "share of discussion" created by overly verbose panelists.

12. Extend the study to reach redundancy. (This applies primarily to focus groups.)

Research design balances what is needed for the decision vs. the investment in time and dollars, particularly the latter. Companies with larger research budgets do as many as eight to 10 focus groups in a single study. Others may go with only one or two. Upon finishing, say, two or three sessions, we know what we have but we struggle with whether it is valid or representative. In projects with more sessions we invariably reach a point in the second half when, upon concluding a session, we note: "We didn't need that. We already knew what they were going to say!" This happens again in the remaining sessions and we go home confident in our conclusions. Big decisions have large downsides. Only by investing in a study of sufficient scope will one obtain the learning adequate for correct and confident decisions. | Q

Name:	Kelly
Age:	37
Profession:	Mother, Web Designer
Earnings:	$38,000, part time
Location:	Park Slope, Brooklyn
Reads:	Architectural Digest
Watches:	Never Mind the Buzzcocks on BBC
Listens to:	Garrison Keillor, every Saturday
Thinks:	Her avatar's hair should be longer
Feels:	Your client's brand…

"Gets me"

"Makes me feel good about myself. Reflects who I am and who I want to be."

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

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qualitative research

Old methods, new approaches

By Steve Richardson

The evidence of the positive impact of technology is all around us. Work is completed faster. Business processes are more efficient. Results are delivered more quickly. And for qualitative researchers, technology has opened the door for expanded business opportunities that in some cases didn't exist even five years ago.

As in many sectors of business, the adoption of technology in the qualitative research field varies by practitioner. Traditional methods of research and reporting are working just fine for some researchers and clients. For others, the exploration and use of new technologies is driving new methodologies. In some cases, emerging technology is changing what some clients expect from their qualitative research partner.

For example, last year a major cosmetics manufacturer was redesigning its Web site and the initial plan was to conduct in-person usability interviews in New York City. Participants would navigate and explore three different proposed Web site designs and offer input to the research team. The client partnered with Kristin Schwitzer, founder of Beacon Research, Severna Park, Md., and a member of the Qualitative Research Consultants Association (QRCA), to rethink the plan. They elected to first conduct concept research using online bulletin boards prior to performing usability research. But it was the methodology of the second phase of the research – a first of its kind for the brand – that got the team excited.

Technology brings efficiency, opportunity to qualitative researchers and clients

Schwitzer conducted online usability interviews – using Web cams, phones and screen-sharing technology – to conduct live research with participants located throughout the country. Both the researcher and the participant used Web cams and the phone simultaneously, which allowed Schwitzer to communicate live and "read" participants just as one would in an in-person focus group or usability interview. The screen-sharing technology – in which both participants see each other as well as the same images – allowed the participant to navigate through the prototype Web site and have cursor control, which was visible to both the researcher and observers.

Online usability research allowed the project team to include participants from around the country without the expense of travel. In addition, respondents were able to test the new Web site in a natural setting, and

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the design unearthed very specific learning on respondent likes and dislikes regarding the three designs and on the prototype as it was developed.

Increasing demand

This is just one example of the growing adoption of "collaborative software" - tools that enable people involved in a common task like qualitative research to achieve their objectives. And while it is just one example, it is indicative of an increasing demand by clients for their research partners to understand and use emerging technologies in their projects.

"My clients' needs drive the platforms and technology I use," says Matthew Towers, founder of Towers Research Group, Fairfax, Calif., and a former co-chair of the QRCA's technology committee. Towers cites a current project in which the agency and the client use Adobe Connect or Basecamp to share communications, files and scheduling; as a result, he uses the technology as well.

Kevin Kimbell, a QRCA member and founder of San Francisco-based TKG Consulting, takes it a step further. "I use technology know-how as a competitive advantage. The fact that I know and embrace technology puts me in a smaller group of researchers vying for the same work," Kimbell says. But like most tech-aware qualitative researchers, Kimbell is quick to point out that the technology isn't the driving force, but rather it's the clients' needs and outcomes that determine how he uses technology. "I don't evangelize any particular technology - I use what the client needs to achieve their goals."

Tools have emerged

There are many technology-based tools that have emerged in the last five to 10 years. Some have become commonplace for marketers and qualitative researchers; some are so new that the technology to support them is in its infancy.

Online bulletin boards - also called online discussion groups - have become one of the most popular qualitative methodologies created by the advent of the Internet. Online bulletin boards take many different forms, as dictated by the research needs, but they drive participants to a Web-based bulletin board where they can comment on and post stimuli, react to stimuli and react and respond to researcher prompts or to other study participants.

Some of the biggest advantages of online bulletin boards are that they eliminate geography and travel as potentially complicated and costly factors in research. Participants come and go when they want - over days or even months - and they participate at times that are most convenient to them. This opens the door to a volume and geographical spread of participants that would have been impossible to achieve pre-Internet. Further, online bulletin boards allow for activities that are difficult or impossible to do in an in-person group setting. For example, being able to get parents to ask their child about some stimuli in the middle of the discussion and having them report back to the group about their child's reactions.

Online bulletin boards give the

qualitative researcher many unique advantages, including the ability to decide if and when the participants will be able to see each other's posts, and the ability to link them directly to other Web sites or online stimuli. In addition, researchers have an immediate and exact record of the discussion that eliminates the cost and time of transcription.

"Every participant answers every question in as much depth as they want, so I am able to cover more ground at a deeper level as a result," says Dorrie Paynter, founder of San Francisco-based Leapfrog Marketing Research and co-chair of the QRCA's technology committee. "I've also noticed participants are more willing to express diverse opinions as they aren't worried about hurting the feelings of the person sitting across the table from them. The result is less group-think," she says.

Kimbell adds that he likes this technology for online journaling - either a series of one-on-one interviews taking place over a few days or a week, or simultaneous one-on-one interviews. The journaling concept allows him to ask questions, give assignments and ask for feedback in a more direct, one-on-one way that he says often garners some of his best findings.

In a recent project for Hawaiian Airlines, Paynter was brought in to get a greater understanding of the full customer experience of flying with the airline. She considered traditional paper journals, video journals and focus groups, and settled on online interactive photo journals, a form of online immersive research, because of their ability to combine text and photo entries with ongoing, almost real-time interaction with the participants throughout their travels. "It was like we were living with their customers before, during and after their trip, and the ability to communicate with them while they were still traveling made the learning much more insightful and targeted," she says.

"The technology allowed an unlimited number of our internal stakeholders to follow the passengers' journeys as they unfolded, which allowed executives beyond the core research team to get engaged in the research," says Rick Peterson, vice president of sales and marketing at Honolulu-based Hawaiian Airlines.

Meet and collaborate

Webconferencing services like WebEx, Enunciate and Go2Meeting allow two or more users to interact, meet and collaborate in real time over the Internet. They have made research and reporting easier by eliminating geographic boundaries, and more clients are embracing the technology.

Paynter finds Webconferencing particularly useful in presenting findings to clients. Not only is geography not an issue, but Paynter says that this reporting method helps ensure that clients are truly understanding and processing her research results. "Clients don't always have the time to read full reports, so this is a great way to emphasize key points and encourage discussion to help the team internalize what we've learned," she says.

Towers adds an important point for researchers. He says that when his clients - mostly technology-focused companies - want to use Webconferencing technology, he has no choice but to adopt it himself. "Their expectation is that I can use the same technology that they use in their own business," he says.

Internet streaming allows people - like client-company executives - to see focus groups live without having to be at the facility in person. A client team can sit in a conference room at their own headquarters and watch the focus group or they can watch from their home, office or any computer with a broadband Internet connection. In most cases, a smaller client team sits in the backroom at the research facility. In-person and remote viewers can chat and communicate live during the focus group session.

In addition to the obvious benefits to the client, Internet streaming technology helps the researcher with recording and reporting as well. Video of the session sits in a server for a period of time after the session, allowing the reporter or writer to view it at their convenience. The technology also allows reporters to search for certain words phonetically so they can, for example, easily find the point in the session where a brand name or company name was mentioned. Video highlights can easily be pulled out for reporting as well. "The technology is getting better and better," Kimbell says. "The storage and analysis tools in particular are really helping make qualitative researchers' jobs easier."

Eric Rasmussen, director of consumer insights for online photo service Shutterfly Inc., Redwood, Calif., recently traveled with a product manager to conduct focus groups in various parts of the country. Shutterfly used streaming software to allow team members at the home office to view the focus groups live without having to travel, communicating comments, questions or suggestions via online chat during the sessions. "The benefits were simple but important," Rasmussen says. "The end result was a richer understanding and buy-in of the qualitative findings when we shared them with the larger organization." He predicts an increased popularity for Internet streaming as clients see the many advantages of the technology.

Online survey software tools like Zoomerang and SurveyMonkey can be useful tools for pre-screening research participants before they get to the recruiter stage. Paynter says online survey software is simple and inexpensive to use and surveys can be developed quickly and sent to a large number of participants. This enables researchers to weed out less-qualified participants in an efficient manner before the recruiter makes calls.

Paynter adds that online surveys are good for studies that are a hybrid of quantitative and qualitative research, and they can be useful before and/or after qualitative research. Paynter cites the launch of a new curriculum-based educational software product from the Learning Company, in which she used both qualitative and quantitative research to help guide development. The team found that conducting a series of online discussion board groups with parents and educators first helped the client better understand what issues to pursue in the quantitative survey, and how to word the questions to get at important information. "We even used some of our discussion board participants to conduct a trial run of our survey before we launched it. Online software makes this multi-step process much more efficient and cost-effective than it was in the past, and the end result is much clearer insights," says Bryan Rodrigues, director of consumer brands for the Learning Company, San Francisco.

Exciting time

Embracing technology is important because efficiency and convenience are major drivers for both clients and researchers. Paynter says technology has expanded the number of tools in the researcher's toolbox. "Technology has broadened the number of methodologies I can use to help clients achieve their research objectives, and my clients are appreciative of my ability to efficiently and, more importantly, effectively deliver their results."

Towers adds that many technologies are still evolving, and many more are on their way. "In relatively short order, there will be more common platforms for collaboration. The big technology companies are continually developing platforms that will change the landscape for years to come," he says. "It's an exciting time to be a researcher." | Q qualitative research

Challenging the status quo

By Sheri Forzley

Inserting qualitative research into the product development cycle

I'm sure you're familiar with the old adage, "Hearing is believing." No? Well, how about, "Seeing is believing."? I'm sure you all remember that one. The point of my asking is this: Why does it appear that during the critical stage of product development, development teams avoid "seeing" how key aspects of their new inventions have impacted the consumer?

To understand why let's take a look at a typical developmental cycle. Whether it's a simple ingredient change or a groundbreaking innovation, there are timelines and hurdles involved in moving prototypes through rounds of testing (the primary difference between simple and innovation projects has much to do with timelines, as the latter have the longer, more involved testing). Regardless of the type of project, they all generally start with an idea. Oftentimes these ideas are generated following more traditional qualitative lines of testing, including ethnography, observational approaches or even focus groups. This part of the development cycle - the "fuzzy front-end" - has traditionally been the stage for scoping out new ideas (e.g., identification of unique consumers, their mindsets and/or their unique behaviors/habits that will lead to unique market opportunities).

Once this broad concept or idea has been identified, the product developer is off and running, cranking out prototypes to be tested. During this time, the typical forms of testing rely heavily on quantitative techniques and are iterative in nature. From in-home tests to trained panels to technical testing, the attempt here is to clearly understand how much the changes made to the product have impacted the final perception. The objectives of these tests revolve around more concrete and targeted attributes that are perceived and rated differently from some identified benchmark. Through this quantitative testing, some sort of statistical outcome is expected, thus providing reassurance that a "real" difference will be delivered to the consumer.

At this stage, the product is typically turned over to the market research teams to deliver a compelling product/concept package that will ensure a win in the marketplace. The market researchers are most often looking for the emotional connections between the consumer, the

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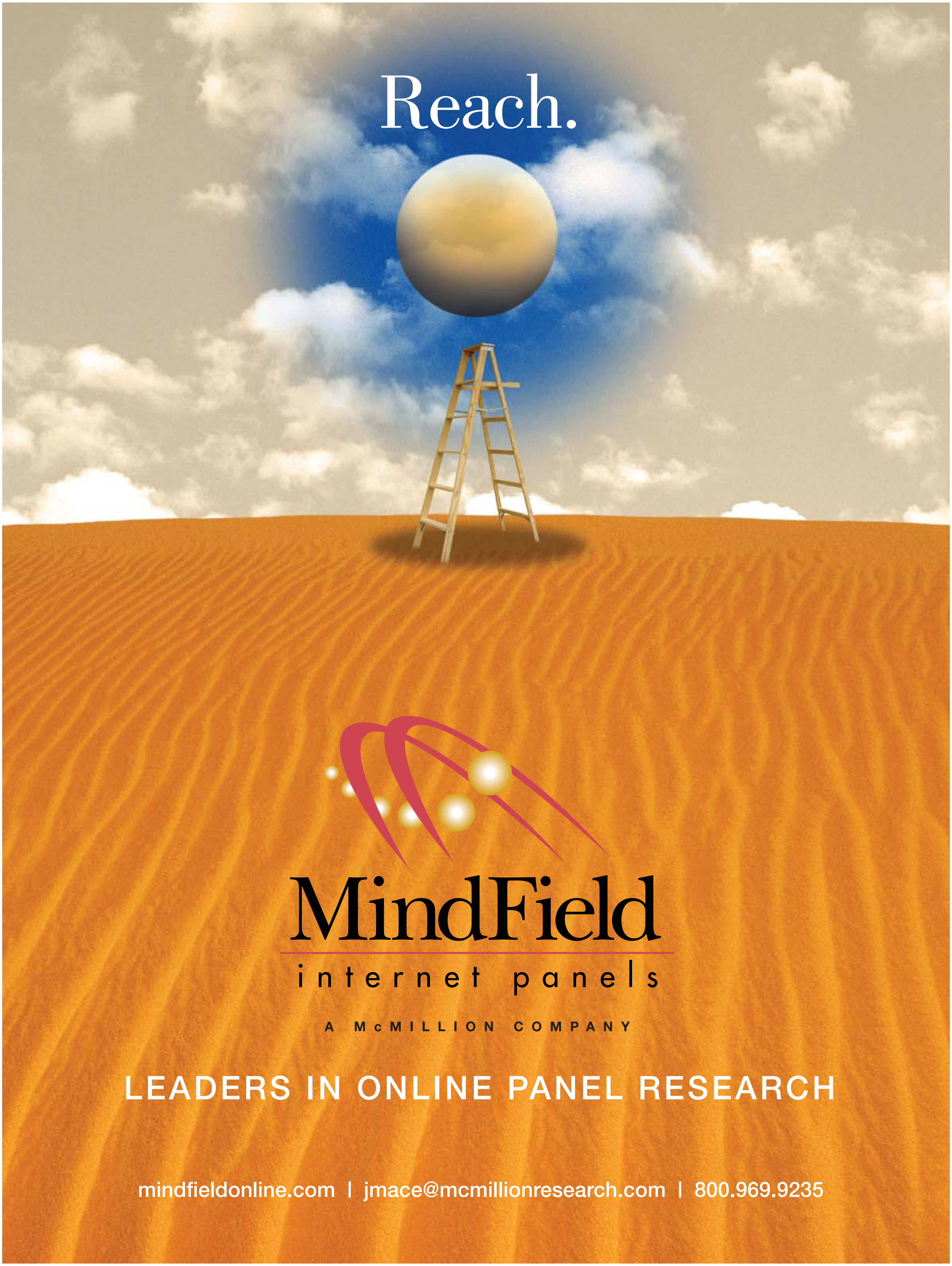
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product and the brand. When all of this is deemed "just right," the product is launched. Most of this final research involves a more qualitative testing approach which allows the researcher to delve more deeply into the psyche of respondents to ensure delivery of the best product and concept mix. While there are certainly quantitative tests (e.g., BASES, in-market tests, etc.) in play at this stage, due to resource constraints, these are typically undertaken only after all team members are "sure" of the expected results. Nobody likes surprises!

Functional and emotional needs

So, what's wrong with this picture? It has long been confirmed that consumers buy the products and services that best meet both their functional and emotional needs. Rare indeed would be the product or service that doesn't have some type of emotional connection. And yet, in the scenario above, the emotional or social contexts of an idea are pursued at the beginning and the end of the cycle where there is also likely to be little or no interaction with the actual product. During the critical time periods of product evaluation, the primary emphasis is clearly on the delivery of functional components, with the emotional or contextual connections mostly ignored. Even beyond that, consumer mindsets and circumstances and their contexts (being a dynamic process) have continued to evolve over the course of the project. Therefore, the consumer contexts upon which the idea was established could very well be different by the time the product and concept are united again at the end of the cycle.

Shouldn't the primary reason for any research be to gain the deeper insights into how consumers conceptualize a product category, how they filter choices and how they are actually using a product, brand or service? If qualitative methods are inherently seen as a way to identify the emotional connections, to understand mindsets or to keep your finger on the pulse of consumer habits and attitudes, then why aren't qualitative methods used more frequently? Skepticism, that's why - particularly on the part of the highly-trained, technically-oriented scientists on the development team.

Qualitative research, because of its highly interpretative, creative, impressionistic and emotional characteristics, is often viewed as being in direct conflict with the more objective, measurable forms of research. Due to its subjective nature, qualitative research is not seen as being repeatable or predictable.

It should be recognized, however, that even in the realm of statistics, subjectivity is unavoidable. Whether in the interpretation of the final results or in the generation of the attribute list to be tested, subjective assumptions are being made around how consumers think about products and their interactions with them. In

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my experience, the development team can often be blindly led by the numbers. If the qualitative and quantitative results conflict with one another, the fallback position almost always is the quantitative. However, it must be recognized that the consumers' experience is highly subjective. Their experience and perception represents a complex set of psychological constructs derived from previous experience with the product, current product features, brand image, changes in their life and product expectations.

When a consumer reveals his or her delight or frustration with a product, it is more often the result of the sum total of the product experience, not necessarily because of one specific perceivable and ratable benefit that was or was not delivered. Product evaluation via questionnaire often demands the recreation of a specific situation or certain circumstances that aren't easily recalled. As you move further away from the actual product experience, memories become clouded and therefore, difficult to reconstruct while rating the product.

Has its place

I would certainly never advocate the exclusion or elimination of quantitative testing. It absolutely has its place in the mix. On the contrary, I would postulate that it is equally important to keep the consumers' contexts close to the research paradigm across the entire product development process. To understand how products fit within the consumer's context, you must be able to observe the environment into which the product category fits. More research designers need to take into account not only statistical evidence that a consumer perceives a difference in product performance but also why and how these things matter. In other words, the research needs to be designed to hear what consumers are saying and to see what they are doing.

I would advocate that all forms of qualitative research (ethnography, observational, and yes, even group discussions) should be incorporated across the entire product development cycle. These methods can bring an essential part of understanding to the quantitative data. They can reveal how real people in the real social environment think and talk about your ideas or use your products.

Consumers are not that great at recalling what they do, where they do it or for how long they spend doing a task. Nor are they likely to remember the specific features that caused them to like or dislike a product. This is particularly evident with very routine behaviors (e.g., washing hair, brushing teeth, doing laundry, cooking, cleaning, etc.). If you employ a survey questionnaire to ask consumers to evaluate product performance, how the package opened, how much the product lathered or the various steps during use of the product, their recall can be quite vague. It is through the course of observation that you can witness the how, where, what, when and why.

Observing patterns

Consumers are quite adept at altering their behavior when the product or packaging doesn't fit their current pattern. By observing patterns of usage, new opportunities can be revealed. While companies may have clear intentions for product usage, consumers may or may not use it as intended (e.g., women using hair conditioner as a shaving lotion on their legs). Was there something inherent about women's perception of hair conditioner that suggested that it may also be good for hair on their legs or did they just forget to replace their shaving gel and this was the closest thing they could come up with? Could other personal-care products take advantage of this observation?

Along the same line, consumers will often report that they always do "X" while, in fact, you see no evidence of such behavior. For example, a woman claiming that she always wears gloves when scrubbing with cleansers was rarely witnessed wearing those gloves during the course of our observing her during normal cleaning events.

Sometimes consumers simply make mistakes or can't discern the manufacturer's intent. For example, have you ever struggled with the removal of the little tab insert in a new deodorant? Some people resort to pulling it out with their teeth – not a good example of a product's

package working effectively. When asked how easy the deodorant pack was to open on a questionnaire, consumers may never mention (or even recall) this actual removal approach and alternative packaging might never be considered. At other times consumers are just being inventive by combining multiple products to achieve a singular benefit (e.g., combining gels, mousses, rinse-off conditioners and hair sprays all on wet hair to achieve specific hair benefits or styles), thus highlighting problems for existing product forms (i.e., mousses being too drying to the hair or gels leaving the hair feeling too stiff) or even identify previously unrevealed advantages (i.e., controlling frizziness with conditioner on dry hair).

If you weren't observing usage behaviors, you might never know they were using all these other options during the course of the evaluation of your specific product.

Consumers can also respond with subtle behaviors that they aren't able to articulate and of which they may not even be conscious (e.g., wrinkling their noses, shrugging their shoulders, fondly stroking a preferred package or absentmindedly playing with an inventive new "fun-to-use" package). Consumers are sometimes aware of these things but feel their reactions are too personal or even socially undesirable and will choose not to evaluate products using such descriptives. They may perceive a product in a particular way but not even bother to mention this, because in their view, it is not a logical or rational reason for liking or disliking the product. All of these possibilities should be examined in more detail, as they could potentially reveal hidden consumer insights and new opportunities.

While qualitative research has for years been a critical market research tool for exploring marketing ideas, I would recommend that qualitative research techniques become critical tools during product evaluation. If used throughout the development process, you could expose potential flaws and even discover unanticipated advantages earlier in the process and be able to suggest alternative ways to design a product, package or process.

Navigated carefully

The most currently popular forms of qualitative research – ethnography and observational research – allow a deeper understanding of what's behind the quantitative details. By merely looking at numbers, you will never really see the response with which a concept or product is greeted. Granted, qualitative research findings must be navigated carefully, but the attentiveness to all subtle details will lead to true consumer insights.

It is important to remember that data are only one piece of the puzzle, and their significance (what it means to the business) is quite another. Consumer research can only have an impact when it incorporates an interpretative component. The responses or actions recorded from any type of research, qualitative or quantitative, will only reveal the surface of what is really going on with product evaluation. Videocapture allows for realistic observation of consumers acting naturally within their environments. Video also allows for the cataloguing of all activities, objects, spaces and moments of interactions. This documentation further aids in preventing information from being overlooked or misinterpreted.

All too often the executive stakeholders are those who remain most skeptical of our observational consumer insight methods and findings and may never change their perceptions or convictions until they see examples of these findings with their own eyes. Industry needs the richness of new observations and insights that take place when you actually observe people and then go on to dissect and discuss their actions, steps or processes that have taken place. You need to be there to actually see that consumer roll his or her eyes just before you hear them say, "What a grand idea!" | Q

the business of research

Managing the satisfiers and dissatisfiers

By Bonnie Eisenfeld

How market research vendors can maintain strong relationships with corporate clients

If you're a market research vendor and you've never worked on the client side, you probably know an awful lot about how to run a research project but maybe not so much about the client's internal headaches. In this article, to help you create long-lasting client relationships, I will give you a glimpse of the client's-eye view of research vendor relationships.

First off, I cannot emphasize enough how important the vendor's project director is to the success of the research project and to the long-term relationship. To the client the project director *is* the market research vendor. The best project director helps the client define the research objectives and research design, executes the project flawlessly, monitors the project closely, delivers beyond expectations and provides insight about the findings.

The project directors that a client wants to use over and over again are those who the client doesn't have to worry about. This type of project director understands all aspects of the research process, understands the project's objectives and ensures that the outcome will be above expectations. The client may find out about problems that arise during the project but knows the project director will fix them. The project director provides a safety net; the client knows that at the end of the project there will not be a disaster, there will be excellence.

Project directors of this caliber raise the bar for other market research vendors. They are teachers, helping the research buyers and users to understand the research process better and how it can help them succeed.

Drivers of dissatisfaction

In some ways, the drivers of dissatisfaction are even more important in the market research vendor selection process than drivers of satisfaction because the dissatisfiers are the reasons clients stop using particular vendors. Dissatisfiers are often the key differentiators between vendors. Dissatisfiers can exist at a relationship level or a project level.

A few examples of relationship-level dissatisfiers are:

• The project director is never around to take calls; he or she delegates everything to a junior person who can't answer questions or solve problems.

• The project director does not report problems that occur during the

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project and client is surprised when they finally erupt at the end.

• Projects consistently come in late or over budget with no advance notice.

A few examples of project-level dissatisfiers are:

• The field service recruits unqualified respondents.

• Underqualified interviewers are used for special target populations.

• The moderator cannot keep up with changes that were made in the discussion guide.

• The report lacks depth, interpretation or insight.

• The presentation or report is disorganized and confusing.

Here is a case I heard recently. The vendor's project report was due to the client on a Friday. The project director was leaving for vacation that day and arranged for someone else in the firm to send the report to the client. However, the project director neglected to tell the client that she was going on vacation and did not give the client the name and phone number of the alternate contact person. The day the report was due, the client called the project director and got a message that she was on vacation. Naturally, the client panicked and called the senior executives at the firm: "Where's my report?" The client got the report that day as expected, but the relationship suffered severe damage.

Dissatisfaction with the first project with a new vendor is probably going to eliminate that vendor from future bids. In a long and satisfying relationship, dissatisfaction with only one project will not usually be fatal unless there is a serious, unresolved problem with that project. In all cases the vendor's method of solving problems can actually be a driver of satisfaction for the client. The best vendors deal with problems by reporting them promptly, fixing them and finding a way to deliver something extra to make up for the problem.

Clients naturally have a hard time continuing to use a vendor who has disappointed them. Disappointment with a project is often visible to a lot of people within the company, especially the users of the research data but also other managers who hear about the problem. The research buyer then has to explain how the problem happened and what was done to try to fix it. In extreme cases, an incomplete project is terminated with one vendor and given to another vendor to complete. When a research vendor underdelivers, the research buyer takes a hit on his or her reputation within the company. It can affect his or her ability to operate effectively and could even impact his or her performance rating. Next time a project comes up for vendor selection, this buyer is going to have a reason not to choose the vendor who messed up.

Provide quality information

The corporate buyer of market research, often a research director, has his or her own professional standards and has to satisfy other managers in the company who are the users of the research data. He or she needs to provide quality information, on-time and on-budget, to help develop business, product or communications strategies, or measure effectiveness, or feed information into other needs of the company.

The users of research in the company give their research objectives to the research buyer, who reviews and consults on the objectives, outlines the research design, requests proposals and selects the appropriate research vendor for a project. The research buyer tries to manage users' expectations regarding what data they can get, how soon and what the estimated cost will be. Once all objectives and expectations are set and the vendor agrees, it is important for the vendor to meet the expectations.

When I was head of corporate marketing research at a large multinational corporation and responsible for selecting market research vendors, I considered the top selection variables to be helpfulness and responsiveness of the project director, quality of the research and timeliness of delivery. Price was a factor to some extent but it wasn't the No. 1 factor. If the budget was small, research requirements were limited without sacrificing quality. However, because of budget constraints, I considered it very important that vendors make accurate estimates and meet their estimates rather than bidding low and then going over budget.

In some companies, there is another pressure point added to the mix and driving the selection process: purchasing departments are increasing the pressure for a lower price. As a vendor you may find a conflict be-

tween the need to deliver quality work and the pressure to lower price. If you can't deliver quality within the budget restraints, it is better not to bid on those projects. Ultimately, the client will not be satisfied with your work and your reputation will suffer.

Referrals and recommendations

Market research vendors' reputations are driven by client satisfaction. Some companies maintain internal databases on their vendors to share satisfaction ratings and comments. Research buyers also contact colleagues to get referrals and recommendations. When a vendor supplies references, many buyers will actually contact the references and get their opinions. Some surprises will occur during these conversations. Sometimes a reference given by a vendor will not be totally satisfied with that vendor and will report problems that occurred. The vendor should have found out about those problems and worked to correct them before giving out that name as a reference.

If you are excellent at one methodology, subject area or target population and you consistently keep up the level of excellence, you should have no problem retaining clients who want that specialization. Some satisfied clients may ask you to do other types of research. Your dilemma then is to decide whether you will be able to maintain your level of excellence in an expanded role. If you're sure the answer is yes, you should go ahead. There have been success stories about vendors who learned new areas to satisfy client demand and delivered excellence in all of them. However, when a vendor does not devote enough resources to develop a new area, it may fail. The client will then be dissatisfied, and then the whole relationship is at risk.

Measure satisfaction

Market research vendors often do not take the time to measure their clients' satisfaction. I personally can remember only one time in my entire career when I was asked to participate in a vendor's client satisfaction survey.

If you are a vendor and over time you find you are getting fewer RFPs from some clients or experiencing a decline in winning proposals, you would benefit by conducting a client satisfaction study to find out the reasons for the decline. Some clients may be choosing competitors for certain projects and may say price is their reason. In many cases, however, price is not the sole reason. The problem may be a decline in client satisfaction relative to competitors or changes in the buyers' decision process or needs.

For such a study, you need to obtain information on who are the participants in the vendor selection process, their needs and preferences, how they rate vendors, their perceptions of vendors, their preferred vendors and any changes in corporate structure that may affect the selection process.

Create a special quota of clients who received proposals submitted within the past three to six months and ask them their opinions about the elements of your proposal process. For those where you lost to a competitor, you need to find out which competitor got the business and why.

The client satisfaction study should use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies. I recommend that you have interviews with clients conducted by an experienced executive interviewer who does not have prior relationships with those clients. The interviewer needs to be someone to whom the buyer will speak openly and honestly. Buyers are often reluctant to give specific negative feedback directly to the project director they have to deal with. It's an unpleasant task, like giving a negative performance review to an employee. Ideally, the best interviewer is an outside independent executive interviewer, who will bring no bias or defensive posture to the interview.

Once you determine the basis on which vendors are rated, your next step is to measure satisfaction with your company and competitors. Rating scales are useful as a starting point, but it is most important to ask the reasons for the rating. Any rating less than the highest on the scale should trigger a question about what could be improved. The comments then become the basis for your diagnostics and corrective actions.

As for rating scales, I prefer a 10-point scale, where 10 means exceeded expectations and 1 means below expectations. When I interpret the results, I consider 7 to be an average rating, 8 above-average, and 9 or 10 a top rating. I base this opinion on the fact that, in school, most of us were told that 70 was a C or passing, 80 was a B and 90 or more was an A. I believe that responders consciously or unconsciously use those guidelines.

If you get ratings of 9 or 10 on any item, it is still useful to ask for comments about what the reasons are behind the rating. These comments may help you find out what actions you are doing right and develop intentional strategies that include those actions.

List of factors

You will end up with a list of factors ranked by high to low importance to clients and ratings of your firm and competitors on each factor. Since you probably did this study because your company was losing business, you need to look first at the high-importance factors on which you received low ratings, particularly those on which competitors were rated high. Those gaps are the areas that need improvement.

Diagnostics should lead to identification of specific areas or processes to improve. Maybe you need to create a higher-level project director position or improve training in client management for project directors or you might need to review your respondent recruiting standards, your report-writing process or your proposal-writing process.

If it turns out that your competitors have a major offering that is much better than yours, then it is time to revise your business strategy. For example, if your clients are demanding online research and you don't offer that methodology, you need to offer it or get different clients.

If your findings show that your prices are higher than competitors but no additional value is perceived, these are your strategic options: You can find a way to add perceived value or you can target a segment that is not price-sensitive. Lowering your prices should be a last resort or you risk turning your services into a commodity.

If there are factors of high importance on which you received a high rating and competitors a low rating, you can feel confident communicating those strengths in your sales materials and presentations.

Last but not least, if you do not promise anonymity and confidentiality to the clients who are interviewed, their responses can be reported individually by client name. (Clients usually will cooperate because they know it is going to benefit them.) Individual company reporting is recommended for large clients especially those with multiple buyers within a company. Based on the findings, you may want to create specific strategies for specific clients. Your most frequent user and most satisfied buyer within the company is your ally for cross-selling within that company and may suggest ways in which you can do a better job for that client. At minimum, a satisfied buyer may give you other names of prospective buyers within that company.

Take action

Subsequent to measurement and diagnostics, you need to take prompt corrective action and communicate those actions to your clients. You may need to revitalize your communication program. If you've made the right improvements and the message about your improvements is received and perceived, you should start to experience improvements in number of RFPs offered and number of proposals accepted. To ensure that you do not fall behind again, an annual tracking study is recommended. The world changes and so do your clients! | Q the business of research

How deep do you go?

By Luke Williams
and Timothy L. Keiningham

The curse of the market researcher is that we work in an industry that is reliant upon a specialized skill set that involves complex knowledge and often a particular education. These skill sets are not easily understood by people outside of the research field. Such specialization curses the mechanic, the electrician, the doctor, the physicist and the academic in general because at some point they are all left having to explain the intricate workings of their particular knowledge in over-simplified terms. But rarely does a mechanic have to explain to you how he fixed your car. Because of his training, he almost intuitively knows what's broken and why. All you ask is: "How much will that cost?" He quotes you a price and you tell him to fix it.

Client relationships in the field of market research are rarely as simple as the one we share with a mechanic. In research, we cannot easily identify "broken" parts that can be simply swapped out for new ones, and fixing what is "broken" almost never a linear process. Even in trusting, long-standing client relationships, researchers are typically asked to explain their methodology. Research, though, is complex; we require expertise in quantitative and qualitative research methods, social and economic theory, as well as proficiency in statistics to support our methodological claims. This tends to make it somewhat difficult to explain what we intuitively know to be true. But researchers' abilities to explain and express themselves clearly are critical, as we typically find ourselves in the role of a management consultant (minus the paycheck).

When presenting research results, use your skill set to find the right mix of detail and perspective

Our charge as researchers is to offer deliberate and accurate research that can be thoughtfully presented so that managers may act upon it. We develop models and action plans that are reliant upon the observations we make. While some managers are still satisfied by data dumps, it is increasingly the case that a company's research plans are integrated into a management's strategic plans, and well they should be. If great research tells an illustrative and cohesive story, then all sound decisions are based on a solid and accurate view of the field. But the research picture is only as accurate and focused as

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the methods that are used to paint it.

The trouble is that the research itself is often cumbersome; it can be a fairly daunting task to perform robust analyses that are accurate, insightful and actionable all at the same time. In painting this picture for clients, we bear in mind that our research is heard only as loudly as it speaks. To ensure that our research is heard, it is often necessary to target our presentations and research models with marketing in mind. Are we confident that our research will hold up to analytical scrutiny? Can we make it understandable for managers? Will they be able to use our research to drive change? Compelling research secures a resounding "yes" for each of these questions.

Fundamental challenges

Successful market researchers produce compelling research by conquering the effects of two fundamental challenges: 1) communicating a practical view of the world according to their research, and 2) pinpointing the appropriate level of analytics for a client.

The first fundamental challenge is embodied in a commonly-made mistake: the reduction of complex, dynamic and multidimensional research matters to topical, one- or two-dimensional analyses. The targets of marketing plans are real people and you should always keep this in mind when trying to bring your research to life. Research shouldn't exist in a vacuum and it shouldn't exist in one or two dimensions. Some researchers look at how consumers think and then analyze that against profits, while others look at how people spend their money and then study what sort of demographic splits occur in that spending analysis. Sure, those are important figures to understand, but why does research and analysis stop there? How can we possibly think this alone gets at the heart of what is really going on in a consumer's head? Specific behaviors are not often the product of one or two emergent details in a consumer population, and stuffing people into some flattened view of the world ultimately defeats any effort to better understand the marketplace. And it is doubtful that a seasoned researcher will consider a two-dimensional profile to be a sufficient mechanism for fully understanding consumer behavior.

To address the first fundamental challenge - communicating a practical view of the world - we need to reset our brains. We must remind ourselves that research needs to accurately reflect the world around us if it is to be worthwhile. We must make every effort to view our world in three dimensions - or more! Let's think for a moment - very simply - about all the different types of consumers in the world. Lots of people have very similar behaviors; they buy similar sorts of things. Perhaps it is because they tend to think in a similar way or are

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attracted to similar things. Perhaps it is because they share similar personality quirks or because they have similar needs.

But simplistic thinking like this doesn't tell us all that much. Not everyone who considers themselves to be tech-savvy will buy the same gadgets. Not all newlyweds will shop the same stores. There is nothing specific enough about these attributes that clients can really market to (without leaving most of the marketing plan to chance). Two-dimensional thinking, while simple to grasp, can hide the real pockets of potential in any marketplace.

The potential that managers are seeking lies in profitability. This seems like a fairly pedestrian idea, but it is the foundation of every business model. Beyond profitability, managers want satisfied customers and they want loyal customers. Of course managers want to identify profitable customers who are both satisfied and loyal, as this is where the greatest market potential lies. Marketers, in turn, focus on segmentation as a means of identifying potential profitability. But segmentation schemes are prone to falter because the segments that are developed - often based on a reliance upon individual demographic characteristics - do not accurately reflect the consumer landscape.

An accurate description of any potential customer can go so much further beyond the one or two dimensions that we might commonly think of first. Every client benefits from a better-developed understanding of who their most profitable or loyal customers are, as well as which segments are not making returns on a client's investment (not every customer is a profitable one, not even if they are loyal!).

Segmentation should be incorporated to define the people who actually comprise the groups whose behaviors and attributes you discover within your research results to indicate loyalty, satisfaction or whatever it is that the client seeks to achieve. But this does not mean that sweeping segments solely account for consumer behaviors. The characteristics by which you measure your respondents should be expanded to include as many dimensions as you think exist in the real world, or at least as many as are pertinent. And you should always seek to execute research that falls in line with that wider picture of the world we live (and conduct research) in.

More tangible

The second fundamental challenge - determining the appropriate level of analytics - is more tangible than the difficulties associated with effectively articulating the parameters in which research ought to exist. The trouble with choosing the level of analytics is that depth of research analysis varies directly with the ease of understanding a researcher's statistical evidence. In other words, the deeper and more "small-frame" the analytics go, the more blurry the big picture (the broader context of your research analysis) becomes. Choosing an inappropriate level of statistical complexity can be a professional pitfall because your research becomes separated from the greater context in which your research exists. Certainly, research results must not be statistically unstable, but they don't need to prove the theory of relativity either! So the question remains: how intricate should your statistics and research analysis be?

Some researchers will try to explain the research landscape in terms more accessible to their clients by watering down the mathematics, thereby making it easier to follow and easier to swallow. And some folks even claim that a single question can offer a simple solution to complex research questions. But these researchers suffer from what we call "analytical plague"- dumbing-down complex ideas simply to avoid the heavy lifting required to understand and address complex issues. This does nothing but put the client at jeopardy; they might actually rely on that flimsy analysis!

On the other hand, we do not serve our clients by spewing gibberish, either. Jargon-filled, obtuse reports that seem encrypted with statistical terms usually elicit well-justified yawns from the corporate executives that our research endeavors to enlighten.

The end-goal is to have a level of analytics that is balanced somewhere between these two extremes. You must be able to execute statistical analyses that are accurate, but you must also be able to explain these analyses to your client without their eyes glazing over. Ultimately, the solution to this second challenge is heavily dependent upon your client, and what it is that they feel they need and what they are willing to pay for. But if you share a healthy relationship with a client - and you have the analytical capability to do so - it is often best to offer deeper analyses. Not because you stand to make yourself more profitable by doing so, but because accurate research and robust segmentation stands to make them more profitable.

Illuminates the world

As Albert Einstein famously said, "Make everything as simple as possible, but not simpler." Don't be afraid to use your specialized skill set. It's why your client hired you! Improve your clients' profitability by making sure you that your research illuminates the world that they compete (and we live) in - with all its complexities - and be sure that your analyses have the potency to make an action plan stick! | Q

Survey Monitor

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and 16 percent cite Katie Couric. In looking at the two lists, there are a number of the same people who are in the top 10 on both. Bill O'Reilly, Katie Couric, Barbara Walters, Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity of *Fox News* all are in the top half of the favorites and the least favorites list.

For Republicans, the top three favorites are Bill O'Reilly (42 percent), Rush Limbaugh (28 percent) and Sean Hannity (27 percent). Democrats chose Anderson Cooper (22 percent), Brian Williams (20 percent) and Charles Gibson (19 percent) as favorites. One thing to note is that Republicans are more united behind their favorites while the Democrats are a bit more fragmented.

Democrats show stronger support in the list of their least favorites as three in five Democrats (60 percent) say it's Rush Limbaugh, followed by one-third (34 percent) who say Bill O'Reilly and 17 percent who say Nancy Grace. For Republicans, just over a quarter (26 percent) each says Larry King and Katie Couric are their least favorites. Rush Limbaugh inspires mixed emotions for Republicans as 24 percent say he is one of their least favorites. For more information visit www.harrisinteractive.com.

For many, "green" trumps convenience in packaging

More than half of U.S. consumers would give up all forms of packaging provided for convenience purposes if it would benefit the environment, including packaging designed for easy stacking/storing at home (58 percent); packaging that can be used for cooking or doubling as a re-sealable container (55 percent); and packaging designed for easy transport (53 percent). According to New York researcher The Nielsen Company, U.S. consumers are slightly more likely to give up packaging for convenience purposes than the average global consumer.

At the other end of the scale, Nielsen finds that U.S. consumers are least willing to give up packaging designed to keep products clean and untouched by other shoppers (26 percent); packaging designed to keep products in good condition (31 percent); packaging that preserves products to make them last longer and stay fresher (31 percent); and packaging information, including food labeling, cooking and usage instructions (33 percent). One in 10 U.S. consumers is not prepared to give up any aspect of packaging for the benefit of the environment.

Nielsen's research uncovers some differences regarding attitudes toward packaging between different regions of the world. Generally, Europeans and North Americans agree on types of packaging they are willing to forego to help the environment, with nearly 60 percent willing to give up packaging designed for stacking and storing at home. By comparison, only 42 percent of Asians would be willing to give up these types of convenience packaging, likely because Asian homes tend to be smaller and have limited storage space, so "stack and store" options are more practical and preferable.

Environmentally-aware New Zealanders top global rankings as the most prepared to give up all packaging aspects for the sake of the environment. This may be due to high levels of eco-consciousness, including in-store reminders and recyclable bag merchandising by supermarkets.

"Factors influencing packaging preferences across cultures include whether consumers drive themselves to stores or if they rely on public transportation; the size of their homes and storage space in their kitchens," says Shuchi Sethi, vice president, Nielsen customized research. "We see cultural food and shopping habits also influencing packaging choice."

According to studies conducted using packs@work, Nielsen's proprietary pack research system, food retailers and manufacturers are continuously striving to meet consumer demand for more eco-friendly packaging solutions that minimize impact on the environment.

"In more eco-aware markets, including the U.S., there is an increasing expectation of packaging with minimal environmental impact, although for most consumers, this doesn't necessarily translate into a willingness to pay more," says Sethi. "What most consumers expect is packaging that provides an added 'feel eco-good factor' by minimizing environmental impacts."

In more eco-conscious countries, Nielsen's packs@work studies show consumer preference for packaging that is recyclable, biodegradable and safe for disposal, using materials such

as paper, cardboard and/or glass rather than plastic and polystyrene. Glass packaging, for example, is considered to be hygienic, inert, recyclable, tamper-proof and potentially able to extend product life. Its aesthetic appeal provides positive cues about product authenticity, quality and efficiency. For more information visit www.nielsen.com.

High quality and low cost drive consumers to private-label products

Nearly 75 percent of all U.S. consumers rate private-label offerings as excellent in overall quality, with older and lower-income shoppers leading the way, according to a study from Chicago research firm Information Resources Inc. (IRI). The report also reveals that, despite generally flat sales during the past few years, store brands are gaining favorability in key CPG categories, offering the potential of sizeable market share gains among lower-income shoppers.

The study, The 2008 Private-label Report: Understanding Emerging Trends and Key Success Factors in Private-label, provides information for retailers and manufacturers through additional research components.

It's an emerging fact of life for retailers: the quality gap is closing and new consumer attitudes are changing the center-store landscape. Price alone is no longer the make-or-break proposition for customer selection of private-label items that it once was. Quality, variety, packaging and the store's reputation itself are now important contributing factors that determine the selection of a private-label product.

IRI findings show that several categories of CPG private-label products are ripe for market share gains. Commodity-driven categories that are not dominated by a national brand and possess little need for innovation are showing increased favorability. These include staples, such as butter, pasta, milk and creamers and paperware products. Joining these are a variety of new private-label entries demonstrating the consumer's willingness to choose items that maintain or exceed quality expectations, regardless of the label. Among these developing growth categories are refrigerated entrees, skin care products, baby formula, tissue items and laundry detergent.

With price still a dominating factor, the target audience for private-label CPG products remains lower-income shoppers. Compared with other consumers, lower-income shoppers rely considerably more on private-label items across all 295 analyzed food, beverage and non-food categories. In 2007, lower-income shoppers spent 17 percent of their overall CPG dollars on private-label products, as compared to 15.7 percent and 13.7 percent for middle-income and higher-income, respectively. Yet, IRI analysis shows that despite the larger stake that lower-income shoppers have in store brand items, retailers are missing opportunities to tap into the growth potential of this market.

"There's a huge opportunity for retailers who understand the power of private-label offerings," says Thom Blischok, president of IRI consulting and innovation. "Our analysis of lower-income shoppers shows plenty of room for product expansion and a greater chance to gain market share across many key categories. By responding to consumer needs, especially young families who are looking for both quality and value, smart retailers can develop a whole new segment of brand-loyal consumers who look for the private-label first." For more information visit www.infores.com.

Roadside billboards merge successfully into the digital age

Viewers feel that digital billboards provide helpful information about their community and drive traffic to local businesses, and more than 80 percent of viewers recalled at least one ad, according to New York research company Arbitron Inc.'s study Arbitron Digital Billboard Report: Cleveland Case Study. Digital billboards are increasingly being used to deliver news and advertising, as well as public notices such as AMBER Alerts.

Nine out of 10 motorists notice digital billboard advertising messages at least some of the time. More than four out of five surveyed said digital billboards display timely news, traffic, weather and emergency information important to the public.

Of the nine advertisements that ran on the digital billboards, 83 percent of commuters were able to recall at least one ad, and 65 percent could recall at least two.

After seeing a business' ad on the digital displays, nearly one in five viewers were motivated to visit the featured store, and 15 percent later visited a featured restaurant. Thirty-nine percent of travelers who noticed the billboards learned about an event that they were interested in attending.

Local media gained the most recognition from brand-aided recall with local radio stations reaching 50 percent of travelers. The local Fox TV affiliate ads reached 41 percent of commuters. In addition to recall, digital ads help to generate audiences for other media. Thirty-five percent noted a radio station to listen to, and 28 percent noted a television program to watch. For more information visit www.arbitron.com.

Banking and buying on-the-go seen as a safe bet

A study from Rochester, N.Y., research company Harris Interactive finds 16 percent of mobile phone subscribers already use mobile banking services, with 60 percent of these people using the services at least once a week. Many others presently not banking and buying on-the-go expressed interest in mobile banking, with 35 percent open to checking bank account balances and transferring funds via their mobile devices. A third of those surveyed (33 percent) also said they would like to receive text message alerts from their finan-

cial institutions.

The survey finds that on-the-go mobile purchases are on the rise. About 25 percent of mobile phone users with mobile access to the Internet now use their devices to buy goods and services online via a credit card. One in five respondents (20 percent) said they would like to someday use their phones like a mobile wallet, where charges would be billed directly to their mobile accounts. In addition, 10 percent of the survey participants said they would consider wire transfers and stock trading via their mobile phones.

Among those surveyed, the biggest barrier affecting consumer acceptance of mobile banking and commerce is security concerns over personal data. Two-thirds (66 percent) of those interviewed express apprehension about using their mobile phone to transmit sensitive financial information. Nearly the same percentage, (63 percent) report fears about this medium exposing them to potential fraud and financial scams. Sixty-one percent also worry about losing a mobile phone containing personal financial information. Other consumer concerns with mobile commerce include questions about usability (43 percent), reliability (37 percent) and the speed of the wireless network (23 percent). For more information visit www.harrisinteractive.com.

Price and convenience draw women and men to their grocers, respectively

A study conducted by Baltimore marketing company Vertis Communications, Vertis Customer Focus 2008: Grocery, revealed that almost half of chief female shoppers said price-related offerings, such as lowest everyday prices, best advertised specials and store coupons, were most important in deciding where to spend their grocery dollars. Forty-eight percent of women age 35-49 who do more than 60 percent of the grocery shopping value these offerings, as do 47 percent of chief female shoppers age 50 and older and 46 percent of chief women shoppers age 18-34.

While the study shows price-related offerings are important to approximately 30 percent of chief male shoppers, 41 percent of male shoppers age 18-34 value convenience, such as proximity to home and work, more than any other supermarket factor.

Other key findings include: 23 percent of men ages 18-34 are most likely to shop at grocery stores close to home, compared to 17 percent of women the same age; best quality food overall was important to only 1 percent of total adults; selection and quality ranked third behind price and convenience for almost all age groups. For more information visit www.vertisinc.com.

Moms worry about marketers targeting kids but take some responsibility

Overwhelmingly, mothers believe that there is too much marketing aimed at children (89 percent), and over half are extremely or very concerned about the situation (57 percent). Mothers fear that marketers will have a negative impact on a range of issues with the biggest being materialism (82 percent), body image (72 percent), childhood obesity (69 percent) and low self-esteem (65 percent), according to a research session conducted by Waltham, Mass., research company Invoke Solutions. The research session produced quantitative and qualitative data on how mothers feel about marketing to children, what is appropriate and where the responsibility in protecting their children lies.

Mothers are very aware of marketing that is targeted directly to their children (66 percent very or extremely aware) and are concerned about its impact, especially with unhealthy food items and inappropriate toys and games. Fast food and carbonated beverages were considered the least appropriate product categories to be marketing to children (70 percent of mothers labeled each of them inappropriate). Still, not all marketers were labeled as bad. Some of the brands that came up as most admirable were Toys "R" Us, Kellogg's and Mattel. Also, brands that were considered to be selling healthy products or encouraging reading were seen in a favorable light.

More and more children have access to their own technology, which allows them to be exposed to marketers without supervision. Still, 83 percent of mothers claim to monitor their activity frequently or all the time.

In terms of television viewing, 40 percent of mothers watch with their children most of the time, with only 17 percent giving their children the ability to watch whatever they want, when they want. Instead, children are given approved shows or time slots for their viewing. Even with television clearly having the largest impact on children of all media, 69 percent of mothers feel that their TV choices are age-appropriate.

Ninety-two percent of mothers state that their children ask for specific products and brands when taken on shopping trips, especially in the toy, food, snack, game and entertainment categories. While the impact of those suggestions varies across categories, most mothers give in at least some of the time, saying they try to balance saying yes and no (66 percent) or say yes as much as they can afford to (17 percent).

Even with all of the negativity felt toward marketers and specifically those targeting children with unhealthy snacks and games, mothers still feel strongly that it is the parents' job to protect their children (89 percent agree) and that the media should play a more proactive role in limiting marketing to children (83 percent agree), more than they feel that schools and the government need to play a bigger part. For more information visit www.invoke.com.

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market research portals and as an integrated capability within Analyst Direct, Northern Light's subscription-based market research search engine. For more information visit www.northernlight.com.

IRI debuts two new products

Chicago researcher Information Resources Inc. (IRI), has unveiled two new solutions in automated and predictive analysis capabilities: IRI Price Promotion Simulator and IRI Assortment Drivers. These offerings are intended to provide manufacturers and retailers with the capacity to refine their decision-making, as well as advance their understanding of the CPG retail marketplace.

IRI Price Promotion Simulator offers a Web-based software solution that can provide CPG and retail industry decision makers with time-sensitive comparative analysis of price promotion plans through the use of predictive market simulations. Allowing users to create multiple price and promotion plans on the fly, Price Promotion Simulator helps industry executives determine which event approach provides the best ROI and compares the plan post-promotion with actual execution.

IRI Assortment Drivers offers a Web-based capability that simultaneously evaluates the impact of marketing options for every stock-keeping unit (SKU) against every other SKU among competing products within a determined category. Through a process that evaluates shifting marketing support behind a given product, assesses marketing changes of other products and stores in the marketplace and uses third-party survey research to simulate new marketing concepts, IRI Assortment Drivers is intended to allow CPG retailers and manufacturers to assess market opportunities and design targeted product strategy plans.

Price Promotion Simulator and Assortment Drivers join both IRI Drivers on Demand, a model-informed Web application reporting key drivers of period-to-period sales, and Demand Forecaster, a turnkey forecasting, marketing planning and tracking solution, as the core of IRI's Automated Analytics set of solutions. For more information visit www.infores.com.

Separately, IRI is integrating Umbria's social media research capabilities into the IRI New Product Innovation and Launch Solutions suite of services. Umbria is designed to assess both what is being said and who is doing the speaking in the online world, enabling the company to classify posts and estimate gender and age of the speaker, as well as identify and eliminate bogus spam posts. Umbria analyzes voices of the online community by using proprietary Natural Language Processing and machine-learning algorithms to dissect the who, what and why of online opinion.

With this integration, IRI customers can glean product and industry intelligence by "listening" to unfiltered conversations taking place on social networking sites, blogs, chatrooms, message boards and other consumer-generated media. Customers can then integrate this research data with other research to develop products more in tune with consumer interests, as well as launch and promote them more effectively.

IRI's New Product Innovation and Launch Solutions helps CPG and retail companies gain product insights, such as what people are saying - unprompted - about a brand, market opportunities for new products, new product ideas and customer information to identify both existing and new market segments.

IRI's New Product Innovation and Launch Solutions suite includes additional solutions, including IRI Behavior Scan, IntroSource, AtittudeLink, IntroCast, Product Locator and New Product Profiler. For more information visit www.umbrialistens.com.

Illumin8 brightens language search technology for Elsevier

Amsterdam-based information company Elsevier has released illumin8, a Web-based research tool that integrates natural language search technology with content from Elsevier's full-text scientific articles, scientific abstracts, patents and Web sources to provide users solutions for research initiatives.

Illumin8 combines search and semantic indexing technologies to gather meaning, purpose and insight. The research tool extracts and

analyzes solutions, which are then categorized under organizations, products, technologies, approaches and experts. Illumin8 is designed to go beyond simple keyword search, finding and extracting summarized answers and interrelationships that are semantically related to the context of the search query. Illumin8 users will also be able to access the full text of Elsevier journals if they have an online subscription to the journal through ScienceDirect.

To build illumin8, Elsevier has partnered with Manassas, Va., research software company NetBase. For more information visit www.illumin8.com.

New research practice for automotive sector

Rochester, N.Y., research company Valient Solutions has created Valient Automotive, a new practice intended to serve the automotive sector. Valient Automotive's online focus group solution can provide an alternative to traditional focus groups for advertising and product testing. Consumers and clients can participate in focus groups from home and potentially provide three to four times more feedback than traditional focus groups. Any type of visual or audio stimuli can be tested, including static images, print and radio advertisements, television commercials or product demonstration videos. For more information visit www.valientsolutions.com/automotive.html.

Seg-men-tos first to target Hispanic consumers

Rockville, Md., research firm EurekaFacts has released Seg-men-tos, a demographic segmentation system created with the goal of allowing users to know Hispanic consumer markets in detail. Hispanic demographic data sets that are loaded to a workbook, customer profiling services, direct marketing lists, market reports and custom surveys are some of the forms in which the Seg-men-tos system is delivered.

Developed from a sample of 150,000 Hispanic households, Seg-men-tos provides demographic and lifestyle information on the more than 12 million households that make this segment. The segmentation system features nine segment groups. Each segment ranges from two to five million people with similar characteristics, such as language preferences, affluence, geographic region, cultural heritage and life stage.

Seg-men-tos is modeled after popular segment-clustering systems such as Claritas' PRIZM and ESRI's Community Tapestry. It provides reports, charts and maps using the effective who, what, where and how sequence to analyze behavioral profiles, lifestyle correlations, market potential, target concentration and media preferences. Redlands, Calif., geographic mapping software company ESRI has agreed to provide population projections to make the segmentation system more effective. For more information visit www.hispanicsegmentos.com.

E-Rewards and iModerate offer real-time online qualitative probing

Dallas research firm e-Rewards Inc. has launched a new service to enable real-time qualitative probing of online survey respondents. The service, Hybrid Interviewing, is designed to allow researchers to gain insights by engaging individual respondents in real-time, professionally-moderated, online interview sessions powered by Denver research company iModerate.

These sessions occur at a pre-determined point in the survey in an instant messenger-type environment and help clients complete the research story by adding qualitative insight to quantitative data. For more information visit www.e-rewards.com.

Mintel Oxygen breathes new life into understanding market trends

Chicago research company Mintel has debuted Mintel Oxygen, a new online platform for its market research reports which is designed to give clients in-depth market analysis and forward-looking predictions.

Based on market data, analysis and consumer research and focusing on trends, consumer attitudes and business opportunities, it covers everything from food and drink to personal care to financial services. Beyond this, Mintel Oxygen offers features such as What's Hot and Fast Forward Trends. These highlight the most pressing issues in a category, offering opinions on what the future holds and how businesses can succeed. For more information visit http://oxygen.mintel.com..

BrandIndex Service enters U.S market

Palo Alto, Calif., research company YouGovPolimetrix has launched the commercial brand reputation monitoring service BrandIndex in the U.S. The service is a daily measure of public perception of more than 1,000 consumer brands across 41 industry sectors, measured on a seven-point profile: general impression, buzz, quality, value, corporate reputation, customer satisfaction and whether respondents would recommend the brand to a friend. The average of these scores, excluding buzz, is what makes up the total BrandIndex score, while individually they are each an underlying indicator of a key component of a brand's health.

BrandIndex can be used to identify emerging trends, enhance customer loyalty and quality improvements, and monitor the impact of news events, communications and marketing campaigns, new product launches and price changes on any given brand (and how a consumer will feel about it). For more information visit www.polimetrix.com.

Ipsos Canada strengthens Producers' Perspectives panels

Winnipeg research company Ipsos Canada has unveiled Producers' Perspectives – The Ipsos Canadian Agri-Forum, a new proprietary online panel currently consisting of over 1,500 Canadian farmers. This new market research tool is intended to help organizations in both the private

or public sectors gather the opinions of Canada's agricultural producers quicker and in a more cost-effective way.

Producers' Perspectives members have been recruited by Ipsos and have agreed to participate in ongoing research on a variety of topics. All farm operation types found in Canada are represented within the membership of the Producers' Perspectives AgriForum.

Producers' Perspectives - The Ipsos Canadian AgriForum is an online community that uses Ipsos' custom and proprietary Interactive Forum software.

The Producers' Perspectives AgriForum is the second online panel initiative undertaken by the Ipsos Agribusiness, Food and Animal Health practice. The practice has also developed a new proprietary panel consisting of over 1,700 veterinarians in North America. For more information visit www.ipsos.ca/reid/agrifood/.

Kantar Media Research debuts BrandVibe, adds to IntelliQuest

Kantar Media Research (KMR), Austin, Texas, has introduced BrandVibe, a new syndicated study for business-to-business (B2B) technology marketers. It is designed so that technology marketers can use the tool to measure their brand's relative vitality among product category competitors in the B2B marketplace. BrandVibe is fielded biannually within the IntelliQuest Business Study. It measures over 60 technology brands across eight categories that include desktop PCs, notebook PCs, handhelds, servers, operating systems, printers, networking products and telecommunication products. The product is intended to provide insight into the purchase intentions and media preferences among technology buyers in U.S.

Within each technology category, the BrandVibe methodology classifies each potential customer's relationship with the brand. The four classifications are awareness (buyers who are aware the brand exists and that the manufacturer makes the product), suitability (buyers who are aware of the brand and do not automatically exclude it), acceptance (buyers who indicate that they plan to buy the product in the next year) and connected (buyers who fall into highest level of brand affinity). Each brand is then assigned a V-Score, which reflects a relative measure of the brand's vitality among all brands measured in that technology category. The brand's V-Score reveals the extent to which a brand converts potential customers to ever higher levels of brand affinity, uncovering the strengths of emerging brands and the weaknesses of market leaders within the category.

Additionally, marketers who subscribe to BrandVibe can see how their brand's V-Score and classification levels stack up against the competition across over 100 pre-selected targets encompassing key demographics, business types and media behavior. For more information visit www.kmr-group.com/brandvibe.

Briefly

New York-based The Nielsen Company has launched Nielsen PreView, a business-to-business research service providing its members with business and marketing insights. Nielsen PreView will draw upon Nielsen's marketing and media information sources to create original, multidisciplinary studies that address research interests and concerns voiced by members on PreView's Web site. For more information visit www.nielsenpreview.com.

Separately, Nielsen Online, a service of The Nielsen Company, has announced the full release of VideoCensus, a syndicated online video measurement service that combines patented panel and server research methodologies. For more information visit www.nielsen-online.com.

Redlands, Calif., geographic mapping software company ESRI has added new datasets to Business Analyst Online, ESRI's Web-based business analysis tool, designed to enable professionals in commercial real estate, retail, economic development, urban planning and public safety organizations to conduct comprehensive market analyses with data reports and imagery. For more information visit www.esri.com.

The American Rental Association (ARA), Moline, Ill., has released the 2007 State of the Equipment Rental Industry market research report on the North American rental industry. ARA teamed with Lexington, Mass., consulting firm Global Insight Inc. for the third time to produce the report. For more information visit www.ararental.org.

New York research company Arbitron Inc. has implemented diary enhancements that are intended to improve response rates for hard-to-reach demographics. In all continuously-measured markets, Arbitron will offer a second chance to respondents in households who initially agree to participate but fail to return any diaries for the week they were selected. The second-chance diary system will include only those households that return no diaries. For more information visit www.arbitron.com.

Denver-based ingather research has opened a new "reality" focus group research facility designed to offer clients a more natural and realistic environment to conduct research. Reality focus group facilities are each configured differently to meet client needs. Some rooms include a living room, conference room, full kitchen, contemporary and library offices, dining room, wet bar and youth features. The new Denver facility is equipped with Wi-Fi; DirectTV; HDTVs for playback; DVD, digital audio, cassette and VHS recordings; and videoconferencing. For more information visit www.ingatherresearch.com.

Mondo Research, Los Angeles, has opened a new focus group facility in downtown Los Angeles, in the South Park area. The facility features an urban loft environment and is located near the Staples Center and Nokia Theater. For more information visit www.mondoresearch.com.

Research Industry News

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New York research companies **Arbitron Inc.** and **The Nielsen Company** have terminated the development of Project Apollo, the proposed single-source, national research service based on Nielsen's Homescan technology for measuring consumer purchase behavior, combined with Arbitron's Portable People Meter system, measuring electronic media exposure. The two companies had been working on the pilot project since early in 2005. Susan D. Whiting, executive vice president of The Nielsen Company, and Steve Morris, chairman, president and CEO of Arbitron Inc., made the statement: "Despite a promising level of interest, we did not secure sufficient client commitments to make Project Apollo a sustainable venture for our two companies."

The Media Rating Council (MRC), New York, has voted not to grant accreditation to New York research company **Arbitron**'s Philadelphia and New York Portable People Meter Services (PPM) and has voted to conclude the 2007 independent external audits. A new audit will be required in 2008 for further consideration for accreditation. Arbitron has indicated that it plans to continue to participate in the MRC process, including completing for the 2008 audit efforts at the earliest possible time.

U.K. marketing services group **Creston** has closed its New York office at a cost of around £600,000, forcing U.S. CEO Steve Blamer to step down because of uncertain economic conditions. Creston has decided to transfer to its London head office the task of promoting its offering to American clients.

Kinesis Survey Technologies, Austin, Texas, has been awarded the U.S. trademark for CAMI in support of branding for its survey solution for computer-assisted mobile interviewing (CAMI). The Kinesis Survey CAMI survey solution combines an SMS Messenger with support for mobile browsers, allowing respondents to access and take surveys over the wireless Web. The Kinesis CAMI solution utilizes a worldwide device library for proper rendering of browser pages to ensure a satisfactory mobile browsing experience.

The Marketing Research Association, Glastonbury, Conn., has reported in its Research Industry Index that the domestic market research industry enjoyed a modest increase in the fourth quarter, according to December 2007 figures. The number of RFPs and proposals increased by 5 percent. The number of booked projects and revenue increased by 3 percent. Staffing levels increased by 2 percent. Operating margins remained stable. Distribution of business across companies shifted, as 45 percent saw an increase, 36 percent remained flat and 19 percent saw a decrease.

Acquisitions/transactions

Research Now, Toronto, has acquired Canadian data collection company **OpenVenue**. OpenVenue is now officially traded as Research Now. Service will be led by the same Toronto team.

London research company **Synovate** has acquired **Peter Seagroatt & Associates** (PS&A), a U.K. retail data analysis firm. PS&A will be integrated into Synovate Aztec, the company's international retail information business.

Smith Travel Research (STR), Hendersonville, Tenn., and Boulder, Colo., research company **RRC Associates** have joined forces. STR's acquisition of RRC extends the range of professional and strategic services it can offer. Both companies will continue to operate under their individual corporate identities and out of their respective locations. RRC is anticipated to gradually increase staffing within the Boulder office. Terms of the transaction were not disclosed.

Redmond, Wash., software company **Microsoft** has acquired Tel Aviv, Israel, marketing company **YaData Ltd.** The company will provide Microsoft with technologies for the online advertising market. YaData's technology will enable Microsoft to provide its advertisers with targeting capabilities so they can connect with their audience and provide its customers more relevant and focused ads. The YaData team will join Microsoft's Israel R&D center in Herzliya. YaData's solutions will be deployed through Microsoft's Advertiser and Publisher Solutions group.

Cambridge, England, advising firm for the telecommunications and digital media indstury **Analysys Mason Group** has acquired **Redbox Consulting Services Limited**, an England-based consultancy firm. The acquisition aids Analysys Mason in strengthening its position as strategic and operational adviser to its industry.

London research company **TNS** has acquired **Compete Inc.**, a Boston digital intelligence company, for an initial cash consideration of $75 million. Dependent on the achievement of demanding revenue performance targets, deferred cash payments will be payable in 2008-2010, up to a maximum of $75 million. TNS will apply Compete's ability to profile, measure and segment the online behavior of consumers to its own 6th dimension access panels; this will start in the U.S.

U.K. research firm **BSRIA** has acquired **Proplan**, a U.K.-based research company that specializes in the building environmental controls, fire protection and security sector. All reports written by the Proplan team are still available and may be obtained from BSRIA, under the BSRIA Proplan brand, and new reports will be developed by the new, larger team of market researchers.

Decision Resources Inc., a Waltham, Mass., pharmaceutical research company, has acquired **Fingertip Formulary**, a Glen Rock, N.J., data firm. The acquisition is part of a growth strategy by Decision Resources Inc. that will allow for cross-business unit opportunities. Its current business units include HealthLeaders-InterStudy, Millennium Research Group, Decision Resources and Arlington Medical Resources. Fingertip Formulary will remain headquartered in Glen Rock, N.J.

Paris research company **Ipsos** has acquired New York research company **Monroe Mendelsohn Research Inc.**, New York, and **Forward Research**, St. Louis.

Alliances/strategic partnerships

Chicago research company **SPSS Inc.** and Burlington, Mass., business intelligence and performance management company **Cognos** have partnered to provide integration between IBM Cognos 8 BI and SPSS predictive analytics technology. As part of the agreement, SPSS and Cognos will undertake joint go-to-market plans with special emphasis on driving predictive analytics in industry areas such as risk management for financial services and insurance, campaign effectiveness and product placement in retail and manufacturing, and sales effectiveness for life sciences.

New York research company **The Nielsen Company** has partnered with St. Louis communications company **Charter Communications Inc.** to commercialize the use of anonymous digital set top box (STB) data for analytical and potential audience measurement purposes for television. Charter is providing Nielsen with anonymous STB viewing data from almost 330,000 households in the Los Angeles area, which Nielsen plans to develop into commercially-available analyses and reports of digital television viewership. Charter will only provide data in an anonymous form to prevent Nielsen from identifying the personal information or identity of any individual Charter customer. Similarly, all Nielsen reports will contain only anonymous and aggregated data.

Separately, The Nielsen Company has signed an agreement with the **Natural Marketing Institute** (NMI), Harleysville, Pa., to provide insights into NMI's Lifestyles Of Health And Sustainability (LOHAS) consumer segmentation model.

Orem, Utah, software firm **Omniture Inc.** and Beijing Internet search provider **Baidu.com Inc.** have formed a strategic alliance designed to give online marketers direct access to the Chinese online market. As marketers incorporate China into their online search campaigns, Omniture and Baidu.com plan to be ready with the technology integration to manage the metrics from those campaigns.

Voxco, a Montreal software company, has reached a partnership agreement with Paris mobile application company **Prylos**. The partnership will allow Voxco to offer its clients the ability to conduct surveys using mobile phones (CAMI technology) through the Y-Study application from Prylos.

Chicago research company **Information Resources Inc.** (IRI) and Port Washington, N.Y., research company **The NPD Group Inc.** have partnered to launch the Beauty Cross Channel Monitor, a cross-channel, retail tracking product for the U.S. beauty industry. The Beauty Cross Channel Monitor is designed provide insights for a range of beauty categories, including fragrance, cosmetics and skincare, from U.S. department stores, food, drug and mass outlets, excluding Wal-Mart.

Association/organization news

The New York-based **Advertising Research Foundation** (ARF) has created a new council named the Engagement Council. The council's first step will be to publish a report cataloging the key insights mined from the past four years of disparate engagement research studies catalogued by the ARF and turn the information into specific action points that can be applied by marketers. The Engagement Council, meanwhile, will focus on next-generation projects, including collaboration with the Direct Marketing Association to learn how engagement relates to and influences direct marketing.

Awards/rankings

J.D. Power III, founder of Westlake Village, Calif., automotive research company **J.D. Power and Associates**, presented the Founder's Award to Dick Colliver of American Honda Motor Co. Inc. for his outstanding commitment to customer service in the automotive industry.

New accounts/projects

San Diego media corporation **More Enterprise Communications** has signed a multi-year contract for New York research company **Arbitron Inc.**'s Portable People Meter (PPM) radio ratings services for XMOR-FM and XSPN-AM, both based in San Diego with transmission from Tijuana, Mexico. The agreement will take effect as and when Arbitron commercializes the new audience ratings technology in San Diego.

Separately, **Mega Media Group Inc.**, New York, has signed a multi-year contract with Arbitron for station-specific custom Portable People Meter listening estimates for "Pulse 87 FM" (WNYZ-LP). In addition, Arbitron has signed an agreement to license the standard, syndicated PPM radio ratings services for the New York Metro, which does not include estimates for low-power television stations broadcasting as radio stations. Only AM and FM radio stations are currently eligible to be reported in Arbitron syndicated services. These agreements will take effect as and when Arbitron commercializes the new audience ratings technology in New York. The agreement allows Mega Media Group to use both the monthly WNYZ-LP station-specific custom PPM listening estimates as well as the standard, syndicated New York Metro PPM radio ratings.

The Council for Research Excellence, an independent forum of media industry research experts created by New York research company **The Nielsen Company,** will commission a year-long study by Ball State University's Center for Media Design (CMD) to observe how individuals consume traditional and emerging video platforms inside and outside the home. The video consumer mapping study, to be conducted jointly by CMD and Sequent Partners LLC, a New York brand and media metrics consultancy, is intended to establish how media is consumed across multiple platforms, in order to develop best practices in the area of video media measurement.

Lincoln Financial Distributors Inc., the wholesale distribution and marketing arm of Lincoln Financial Group, Philadelphia, has selected predictive analytics software from Chicago research company **SPSS Inc.** to help gain a deeper understanding of its financial intermediary customer base.

Great Falls, Va., research firm **Rockbridge Associates Inc.** has expanded its use of products from **Confirmit**, an Oslo, Norway, research software company, to carry out market research projects, including surveys for national e-commerce providers.

U.K research company **YouGov**, which specializes in opinion polling, is making a push into the qualitative research space and has appointed Andy Barker to develop its qualitative offer, which will encompass both online and offline approaches.

New companies/new divisions/ relocations/expansions

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, research company **Pulse Group** has opened its London office. The London office will act as a client development hub for Europe, while continuing to provide data collection services throughout Asia-Pacific.

In addition, Pulse Group has opened an office in New Delhi, India.

WebSurveyResearch (WSR), New York, and London-based health care data collection company **All Global** have expanded their capabilities by merging their research and operations teams across their U.S. and U.K. offices following the WSR acquisition of All Global last year. Moving forward, the integrated company will operate as All Global.

London research company **TNS** has merged its North American and Latin American custom businesses to create one region called The Americas, with planning to happen in 2008 and implementation in 2009.

In addition, TNS has created another new entity called TNS media. The move combines the North American operating units TNS media intelligence and TNS media research along with newly-acquired companies Compete and Cymfony under one business unit.

Dallas retail promotions agency **TPN** has expanded and launched a new unit dedicated to identifying shopper trends and insights around the mealtime occasion and their impact on marketing strategies at retail. The goal is to help marketers uncover opportunities to build brand equity and drive transactions in store.

Framingham, Mass., research firm **IDC** is opening an office in Canberra, Australia, to coincide with the launch of Government Insights, its new market advisory program.

Company earnings reports

Germany-based research company the **GfK Group** achieved a marked rise in sales and income for the financial year 2007. A successful fourth quarter contributed to these developments. In the fourth quarter, GfK achieved organic sales growth totaling 6.5 percent and a margin of 16.8 percent. Based on the preliminary key figures, GfK achieved an organic sales increase of 5.8 percent to EUR 1,162 million in financial year 2007. This means that sector growth, which experts estimate at around 5.0 percent, was substantially exceeded. Adjusted for acquisitions and currency effects, sales were up by 4.5 percent. Adjusted operating income rose by 4.3 percent year-on-year to EUR 157 million. The margin stood at 13.6 percent after 13.5 percent in the prior year. The target growth in sales published by GfK of more than 5.0 percent before currency effects and the target margin of up to 13.5 percent were both surpassed.

London research company **TNS**'s full-year results for 2007 show adjusted operating profit up 12.3 percent to £111.7 million, and adjusted operating margin up 60 base points to 10.5 percent. Adjusted EPS was £15.4, up from £12.7 the previous year. Reported operating profit increased by 38.0 percent to £102.7 million.

Also in 2007, TNS built on existing retail and shopper services with the acquisition of three specialist consultancies, two in the U.S. and one in the U.K.; and combined its Media Intelligence and iTRAM businesses in order to exploit opportunities provided by media fragmentation.

Europe achieved underlying growth

of 5.8 percent, with revenue of £687.9 million, with the U.K. performing ahead of the market (revenue £161.9 million). France grew well in custom business and benefited from additional polling work for the French presidential elections (£145.8 million). There were other strong advances in the rest of Europe (£380.2 million), especially Germany, Spain, Russia and Eastern Europe.

Underlying growth in the North America region overall was 2.4 percent (2007 revenue £205.2 million), described as "a year of rebuilding" and "ahead of expectations at the start of the year."

In Asia-Pacific, Latin America and the Middle East and Africa (ALM), positive market conditions and the firm's regional network contributed to overall regional growth of 8.0 percent, led by China, Korea, Australia and Hong Kong. Overall revenue for 2007 was £174.3 million.

Revenue from the consumer division rose 3.5 percent (underlying) to £327.3 million with strong performance internationally (and especially in Asia) by Worldpanel. Media had a good year (up 7.5 percent underlying to £226.2 million).

Business services (up 4.6 percent to £141.1 million) saw good growth in financial services, particularly in Europe and Asia. Technology (up 7.1 percent to £117.9 million) saw good underlying growth, driven by Asia and North America. Health care performed well in Europe and overall was up 7.7 percent to £102.4 million. Other sectors rose 4.6 percent to £152.8 million, with strong growth in automotive, political and social.

WPP Group PLC (WPP), London, has announced its unaudited preliminary results for the year ended December 31, 2007. Billings were up 5.1 percent at £31.7 billion, around $63.5 billion. Reportable revenue was up 4.7 percent to £6.186 billion. Revenue, including 100 percent of associates, is estimated to total over £7.3 billion. On a constant currency basis, revenue was up 8.2 percent, chiefly due to the 8.6 percent decline in the U.S. dollar against the pound sterling. Like-for-like revenues, excluding the impact of acquisitions and on a constant currency basis, were up 5.0 percent. On the same basis, gross margin was up 5.1 percent. Like-for-like revenues were up 5.3 percent in the first half of 2007 and up 4.8 percent in the second half, continuing the strong organic growth of 5.4 percent in 2006. Fourth-quarter revenues were up 4.9 percent.

Headline EBITDA rose 7.1 percent to £1.072 billion and 9.2 percent in constant currencies. Headline operating profit was up 8.0 percent to £928 million and up 10.1 percent in constant currencies.

Reported operating costs together with direct costs (but excluding goodwill impairment, amortization of acquired intangibles and profits on disposal of fixed-asset investments), rose by 4.2 percent and by 7.9 percent in constant currency. Like-for-like total operating and direct costs rose 4.6 percent. Reported staff costs, excluding incentives (which includes the cost of share-based compensation), were up 4.6 percent. Incentive payments (including the cost of share-based compensation) totaled £230.7 million (£246.9 million in 2006), down 6.6 percent, which represents 20.6 percent (23.1 percent in 2006) of headline operating profit before bonuses and income from associates. Before these incentive payments, operating margins remain strong at 18.7 percent. On a reported basis, WPP's staff cost-to-revenue ratio improved 0.5 margin points to 58.3 percent compared with 58.8 percent in 2006.

Headline operating profit or profit pre-goodwill impairment, amortization of acquired intangibles, interest, tax and investment gains and write-downs was up 8.0 percent to £928 million from £859 million and up 10.1 percent in constant currencies. Reported profit before interest and tax was up 8.1 percent to £846 million from £783 million and up 10.0 percent in constant currencies. Headline profit before tax or profit pre-goodwill impairment, amortization of acquired intangibles, investment gains and write-downs, revaluation of financial instruments and tax was up 6.7 percent to £817 million from £766 million and up 8.8 percent in constant currencies. Reported headline operating margin (including income from associates) increased 0.5 margin points to a record 15.0 percent from 14.5 percent, in line with the revised target set in February 2007.

Net finance costs (excluding the revaluation of financial instruments) were £110.7 million up from £92.7 million last year, largely reflecting higher interest rates, the impact of the cash cost of the acquisition of 24/7 Real Media Inc. in July 2007, partly offset by improved liquidity as a result of a reduction in average working capital.

Reported profit before tax rose by 5.5 percent to £719 million, and by 7.4 percent in constant currencies. WPP's tax rate on headline profits was 25.0 percent, a reduction of one percentage point over 2006. This reflects the continuing positive impact of the Group's tax planning initiatives.

Diluted headline earnings per share were up 9.5 percent at 46.0p. In constant currency, earnings per share on the same basis were up 13.6 percent. Diluted earnings per share rose by 8.0 percent to 38.0p and by 12.0 percent in constant currencies.

BrainJuicer Group PLC, a London research agency, has announced its final results for the year ended December 31, 2007. The agency reported significant organic growth with revenue up by 42 percent to £6.566 million. Operating profit grew by 77 percent to £844,000. Profit after tax increased by 127 percent to £660,000. Earnings per share (diluted and adjusted) increased by 79 percent to 5.0 pence. Cash increased by £642,000 to £1,875,000 (no borrowings). All offices performed well, growing 63 percent in Holland, 38 percent in the U.K. and 14 percent in the U.S.

Names of Note

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Westlake Village, Calif., research company *J.D. Power and Associates* has named **Finbarr O'Neill** senior vice president and general manager of international operations.

San Fransisco research company *AbsolutData* has added to its U.S. executive team, naming **JR Bult** senior vice president, analytics, and **Jim Huttenberger** and **Todd Milligan** director, client development.

David Sparks and Associates Marketing Research, Clemson, S.C., has promoted **Richard H. Groom**, senior vice president, client development; **Leanna Garrison**, senior vice president, client experience; and **Kevin Bray**, senior vice president of the company.

Linda Tholstrup-Smith has joined *Bellomy Research Inc.*, Winston-Salem, N.C., as a senior research manager.

Michael Kim has been named head of the technical support division at Redlands, Calif., research company *ESRI*.

Schenectady, N.Y.-based grocery chain *Golub Corp./Price Chopper Supermarkets* has hired **Peter Cobuzzi** as vice president of marketing to oversee brand management, marketing, advertising, market research, business intelligence and consumer services.

Ted D'Amico has joined *Monroe Mendelsohn Research Inc.*, New York, as senior vice president.

Fenton, Mo., research company *Maritz* has hired **Tom Krause** as director of strategic consulting for the retail research group.

Gas Station TV, an Oak Park, Mich., company that provides television viewing at the gas pump, has appointed **Rita Proctor** as a research specialist.

Dulles, Va., research company *Vovici* has appointed **Rajeev Batra** to its board of directors.

Helge Bastian has joined life science and high-technology company *Sigma-Aldrich* as vice president of global marketing for the research biotech business unit.

G & S Research, Indianapolis, recently restructured its West Coast business unit, naming **Debbie Proudfoot** vice president, business unit leader; **Wendy Martin** manager of client services; **Karin Gray** analytics manager; **Jon Ditmer** analytics manager; **Elizabeth Woerly** analyst; **Merih Bennett** analyst; **Chad Moore** project manager/analyst; and **Laura Aspling** project manager.

questions you should ask when...

selecting a moderator

1>>> Can you help me pick the right methodology?

Your researcher should consult with you to determine the best qualitative methodology for your project. While well-executed focus groups are enormously valuable, each product, client and research outcome is different, and therefore the research methodologies should be customized to the desired outcomes. Many factors go into determining the best methodology to achieve the project goals, including cost, time, convenience and available technology.

2>>> After the project is completed, what are your deliverables?

Most qualitative researchers offer a variety of reporting approaches ranging from written report (toplines, executive summaries, full reports, etc.) to in-person presentations. The type of reporting will vary depending on your needs and pricing considerations. At the end of the project your organization should have learned more about how your customers feel in a way that aligns your marketing efforts with the needs of your customers.

3>>> Can you help me determine where should we hold our focus groups?

A skilled qualitative researcher should be able to help you choose which market or markets to visit. Obviously, you should interview people in the markets where you have customers. If you are in many markets, you should pick representative markets, but also consider a good spread by geography and size of market. As the economy grows ever more global, regional differences in many product categories have been evaporating. However, with some categories regionality is still important.

4>>> What is your philosophy of moderating?

The answer should be in line with the client's general approach to marketing research and also align with the client's corporate culture and with the type of product or service being researched. For example, if the client firm is a staid, no-nonsense company, its in-house researchers may not be comfortable with a moderator who uses a variety of exploratory projective techniques.

5>>> How do you prepare for a study?

A good moderator learns about the client's product/service and its major competition by, for example, reviewing one year's issues of an industry magazine, looking at industry Web sites, examining products in stores or using the products.

6>>> Here are my project objectives - what would be the best qualitative approach to accomplish them?

Keep an open mind as to which is the best methodology: online or offline, focus groups or in-depth interviews, ethnography or in a facility. Think about your customers - how they can be reached best and how well would they respond to each methodology? A strong qualitative researcher should be able to consult with you and help you identify the best methodologies for your project.

7>>> How do you handle the interview/focus group if the materials you are exploring draw highly negative reactions?

A good moderator explores respondents' reactions in an open-ended manner, then, as needed, offers respondents more information, explains other ways of looking at the concept and probes for possible positive points - all in a non-leading way.

Special thanks to Steve Richardson, director of communications for the Qualitative Research Consultants Association, and Judy Langer, president of New York-based Langer Qualitative, for providing input on the questions and responses.

2008

Focus Group Moderator Directory

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This directory was compiled by mailing, e-mailing and faxing listing forms to companies that we identified as having on-staff focus group moderators. Each firm was given a free basic listing including one on-staff moderator and also had the option to purchase a write-up, company logo insertion and industry and market cross-reference categories.
We list 1,200+ moderators at over 1,000 firms.

The directory has four sections. The first section lists all the firms alphabetically and includes their contact information along with the names of the moderators they have on staff. The second section cross-references firms by the industries and markets they specialize in. The third section is a personnel cross-reference of the moderators and the fourth is a cross-reference by geographic location (metropolitan area). For your convenience, this directory is also available online at www.quirks.com

Focus Group Moderator Directory Table of Contents

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abenedict@ankresearch.com
www.ankresearch.com
Allan Benedict
1200+ sessions since 1984

Relying on three decades of research experience, Allan's moderating dives below the service to uncover findings needed for strategic planning. Important to your study's success is his commitment to you, with an emphasis on responsiveness. You will appreciate having one senior level contact - and partner - for your entire project.

A Z G Research
325 E. Wooster St.
Bowling Green, OH 43402
Ph. 800-837-4300 or 419-724-3000
sgries@azgresearch.com
www.azgresearch.com
Jonathan A. Augustine
475 sessions since 1986
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Household Products/Services

Housing

Human Resources/Organizational Dev.

Information Technology (IT)

Insurance

International Firms

Internet/Web

Lawn & Garden

Lawyers

Legal

Leisure

Managed Care

Manufacturing

Mass Merchandisers

Meat Industry

Media

Medical

Medical/Surgical Products

Middle-Eastern

Military

Mothers

Mothers-Expectant

Native American

Newspapers/Magazines

Non-Profit/Fund Raising

Nurses

Nursing Homes

Office Products

Packaged Goods

Paper & Related Products

Parents

Pet Foods/Supplies

Petroleum Products

Pharmaceutical Products

Pharmacies/Drug Stores

Pharmacists

Physicians

Printing

Public Affairs

Public Relations

Publishing

Real Estate/Development

Religion/Churches

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Retailing

Seniors/Mature

Shopping Centers

Sporting Goods

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Tourism

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Transportation

Travel

Utilities/Energy

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Birmingham

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Montgomery

Alaska

Anchorage

Arizona

Phoenix

Tucson

Arkansas

Little Rock

California

Fresno

Los Angeles

Orange County

Palm Springs

Sacramento

San Bernardino/Riverside

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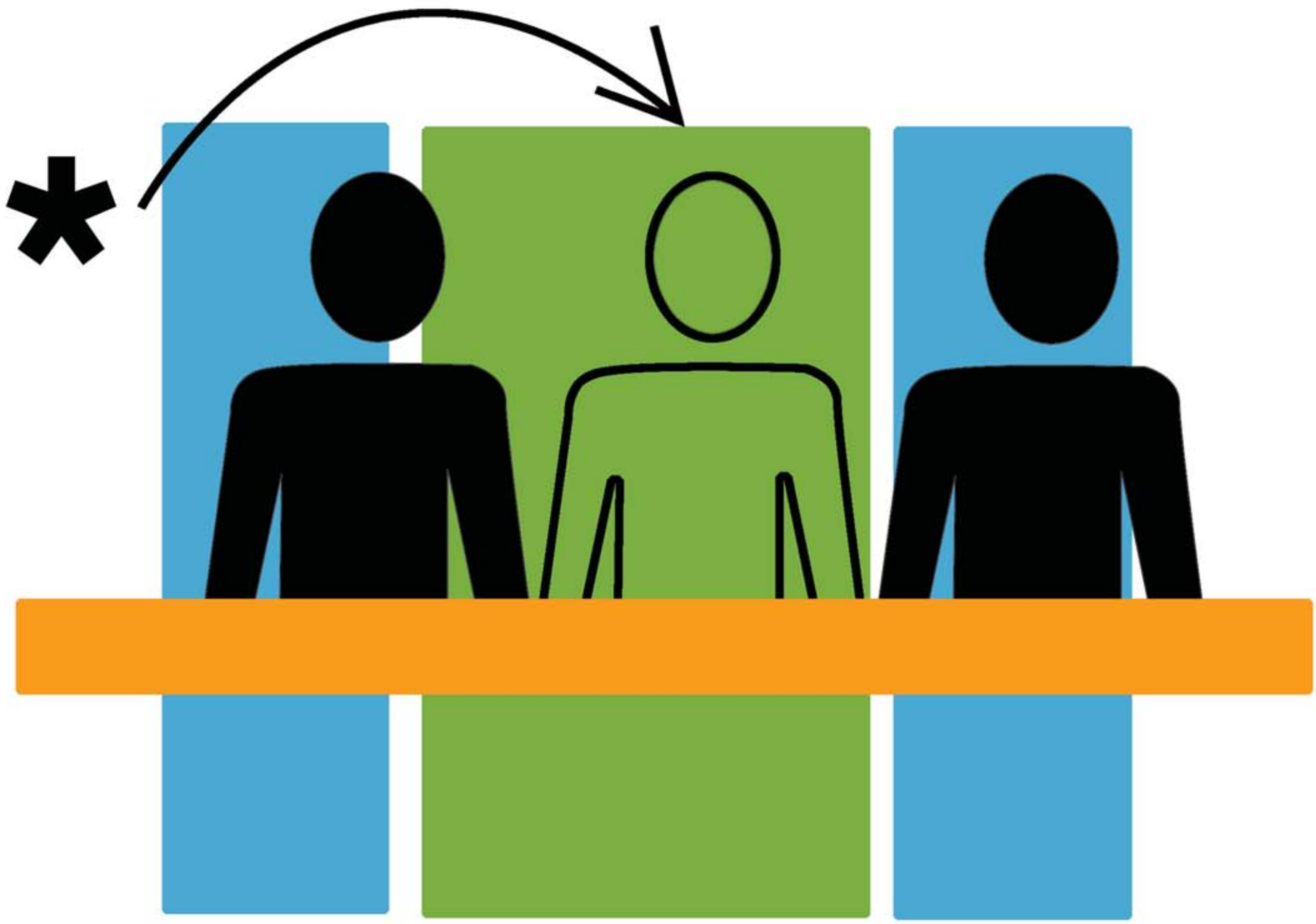

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Trade Talk

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companies. While acknowledging that researchers in client firms, like those on the vendor side, face pressure to keep costs down, Salama said that if clients truly support the idea of quality data, they must vote with their dollars. "A lot of work has been done in the past year on how we can raise data quality standards. But if you don't allocate money to the things you think are important, things won't change. You have to use your financial clout. Clients have a responsibility to make sure that good quality is rewarded and bad quality isn't," he said.

Ron Gailey, senior vice president, director of research and customer insight at Washington Mutual, said his firm is paying extra for quality and has internal programs in place to track and validate data and evaluate data quality, which has led him to desire more partnerships with research suppliers, under which both sides can battle data quality problems. The stakes are huge, he said. "I work at a company that loves research. If I get it wrong, they won't use me anymore. If I get it right, millions of dollars can be made," Gailey said.

Jim Nyce, senior vice president, consumer insight and strategy, Kraft Foods, referenced his early days at Quaker Oats and mentioned that Quaker Oats had an internal vendor who validated research interviews. But those types of practices are now less common, as more and more interviewing has been outsourced and procurement departments have shifted the focus to cost. As a result, some researchers have taken their eye off the ball in terms of data quality. "Data quality isn't an enormous issue but it is an issue," Nyce said. "Our ability to provide knowledge and our credibility rest on the quality of the data we provide. If we don't have quality data, our work won't have impact. Ensuring quality data is everyone's job."

Work together

Both talks ended up echoing similar themes. On Web metrics and research data quality, identifying the problems and agreeing to work together on solutions seemed to be the order of the day.

Some fresh perspectives and a holistic view of Web advertising's role in selling products and building brands are needed to help marketers get a full and accurate picture of what online ads can and can't do.

And with research data quality, it seems that enough discussion has occurred to confirm that quality is something worth fighting - and paying - for. It comes down to research vendors and clients really determining what is important to them.

A long-term view is required. There are dollars to be saved here and there in the short term but the damaging impact of decisions based on poor-quality data can have far-reaching and long-lasting repercussions.

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trade talk

By Joseph Rydholm
Quirk's editor

ARF sessions look at Web metrics and MR data quality

Two oft-debated issues - Web advertising metrics and research data quality - got a lot of air time at the annual Advertising Research Foundation Re:think conference in New York last month.

ComScore Chairman Gian Fulgoni moderated a panel on the growing importance of the Internet as an advertising medium. He opened the proceedings with a brief overview of the Web and its role as an ad vehicle. Despite a 25.6 percent growth rate in spending for online ads in 2007 over 2006, online still only accounts for 7 percent of total ad spending, lagging behind direct mail (21 percent), broadcast TV (15 percent) and even the supposedly near-dead newspaper (14 percent).

Once the panelists were brought into the conversation, the focus naturally turned to the problem of metrics for measuring an online ad's effectiveness. Some argued that clicks are a misleading measurement and may not be the best indication of an ad's effectiveness. But, in the minds of many, clicks are all we have. As one panelist mentioned, marketers and advertisers must measure what they should not just what they can. Therefore, it seems clear that new metrics are needed, but no one can seem to agree on what those metrics should be. As Lee Doyle, CEO of ad agency Mediaedge:cia North America put it: "Are clicks and conversions really the right things to measure? You need to measure what's relevant to each client."

And, rather than viewing the Web and its metrics in a vacuum, consideration should be given to online advertising's role as part of an entire marketing campaign. "We have to understand how the media work together. We should all push for that approach as researchers," said Yahoo!'s Chief of Insights Peter Daboll.

Those sentiments were echoed by Stephen Kim, global marketing director, Microsoft Digital Advertising Solutions. Arguments about which metrics are most valid certainly have a place but they have at times become too much of the focus. "It's not black and white. We all understand the caveats. The finger-pointing is counterproductive. We need to move to a place of looking at how data fit together," Kim said.

Direct request

The following day, Stan Sthanunathan, vice president, marketing and strategy and insights at The Coca-Cola Company, moderated a discussion on data quality that included four research company CEOs and four high-level client-company researchers. Eric Salama, CEO of The Kantar Group, made the most direct request to client

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