# QUIRK'S

### For marketing research and insights professionals

## TEXT ANALYTICS: UNLOCKING INSIGHTS FROM CUSTOMER FEEDBACK

**PLUS**
Marketing research in Cuba

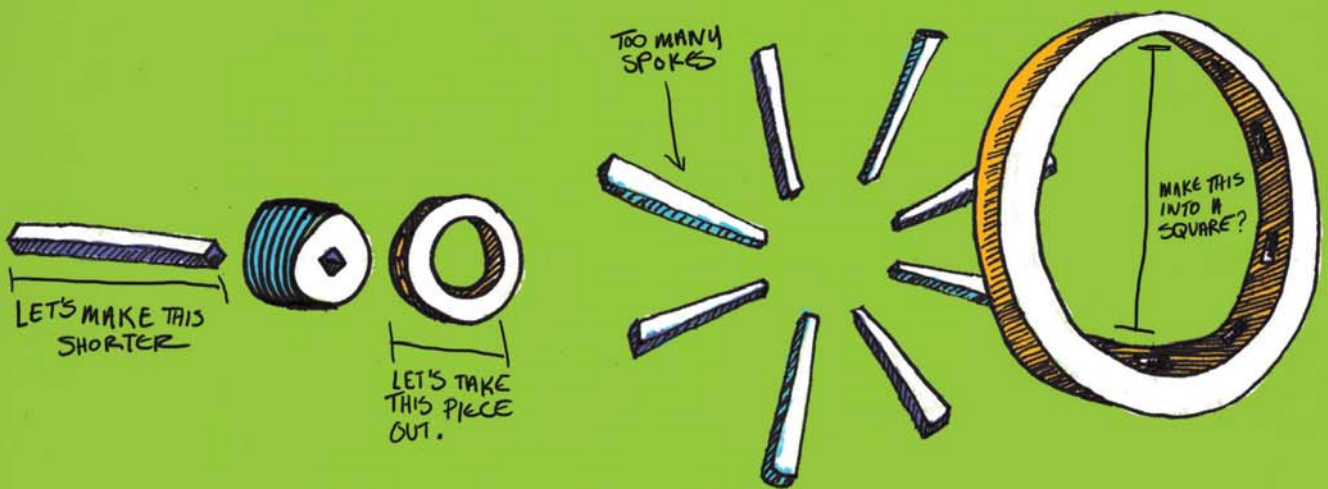Leveraging online qualitative for faster insights

How to price an island

# Actually, it IS like reinventing the wheel

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## ON THE COVER

## TECHNIQUES

## COLUMNS

# CLICK WITH QUIRK'S

••• online, e-newsletter and blog highlights

## ••• events
## The Quirk's Event is all a-Twitter

Here at Quirk's, we have worked to use our Twitter presence to connect with our audience, share our latest articles and blog posts and give live updates from the numerous events we attend throughout the year – including the Quirk's Event. If you are attending the Quirk's Event on February 28 – March 1 in Orange County, Calif., or March 21-22 in Brooklyn, N.Y., we hope you will join in on the discussion using #QuirksEvent. Follow us on Twitter at @QuirksMR for tidbits before, during and after the gathering.

Looking to register for the Quirk's Event? Visit www.theQuirksEvent.com.

## ••• get published
## Make a New Year's resolution to write for Quirk's!

At Quirk's, we are always looking for interesting, objective articles on all aspects of marketing research and we welcome articles from outside sources. Between our monthly magazine, which is distributed in print and digital forms, our twice-monthly e-newsletter and our Research Industry Voices blog we have a variety of outlets for authors.

To submit an article for consideration, send materials to Quirk's Editor Joseph Rydholm at joe@quirks.com or to Quirk's Digital Content Editor Emily Koenig at emilyk@quirks.com. Submission guidelines are online at www.quirks.com/pages/write-for-quirk-s.

## Q // E-newsworthy

**How should MR react to the rise of artificial intelligence?**
http://www.quirks.com/articles/2016/20161126-2.aspx

**Consumers want companies to offer choices, just not too many**
http://www.quirks.com/articles/2016/20161126-3.aspx

**MR strategies for understanding Millennial influence on B2B markets**
http://www.quirks.com/articles/2016/20161126-1.aspx

## Q // Noted Posts

### QuirksBlog.com

**Why Trump's victory is a boon for qualitative research**
https://goo.gl/2musUI

**Is CVS throwing away a solid brand differentiator?**
https://goo.gl/fjehn0

**Has e-commerce killed Black Friday's appeal?**
https://goo.gl/0ML3T6

### ResearchIndustryVoices.com

**The Trader Joe's experience keeps customers coming back**
https://goo.gl/LaZ36y

**Tips to increase your survey response rate**
https://goo.gl/9jGuLb

**Closing the loop on customer feedback**
https://goo.gl/Ttb2id

### ResearchCareersBlog.com

**5 steps to establishing yourself as a leader**
https://goo.gl/ms3VG9

**Inspire action and commitment through presentations**
https://goo.gl/zR5NdT

**Scream it from the rooftops! Market research is cool**
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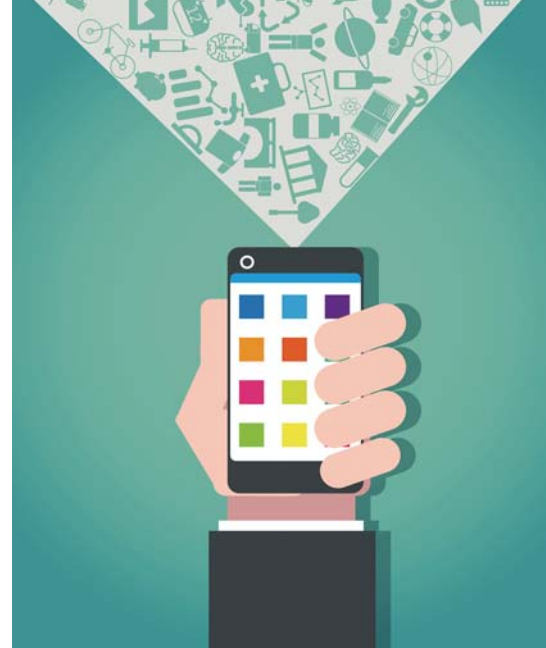
••• grocery research

# Are shoppers using grocery-store apps?

Boca Raton, Fla., marketing firm 3Cinteractive conducted an online survey with more than 500 grocer marketers and customers to find out if there is a disconnect between the directions grocers are headed and the experience consumers are looking for in the mobile experience. While apps have become a primary mobile strategy for many grocers, over half of customers polled (56 percent) said they only use one or two grocer apps on a regular basis, despite the majority saying they downloaded as many as four apps to their smartphone.
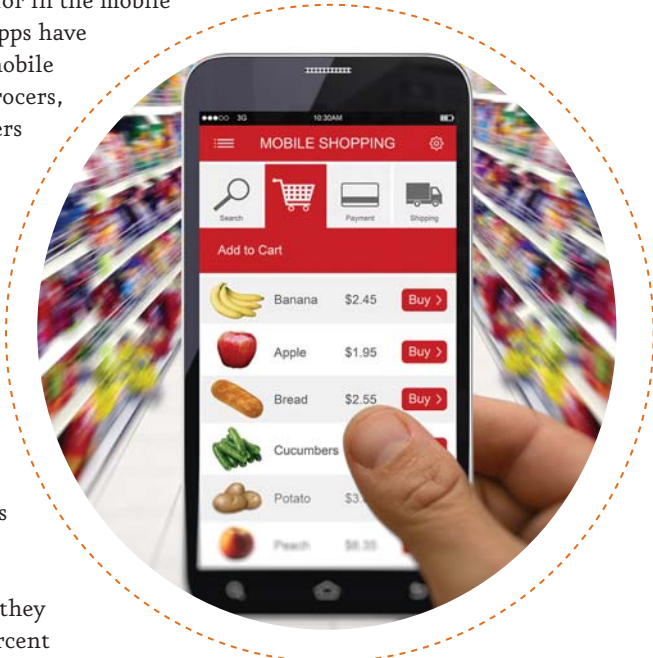
Seventy-five percent of customers polled say mobile coupons have some influence on where they shop. Further, 78 percent of customers say that mobile-enabled coupon programs would influence more visits, more spend and recommendations to friends. A recent mobile loyalty survey from 3C also showed that loyalty programs are key to the mobile experience. (According to Bain, returning guests spend on average 67 percent more than first-time customers.) However, 70 percent of shoppers said they do not sign up for loyalty programs because of the inconvenience of the sign-up process. In the same survey, 72 percent of customers said they would sign up for a loyalty program if the process were simplified by text message. What's more, text message (48 percent) was cited as the most effective form of notification of loyalty communications compared with e-mail (22 percent) and app notifications (20 percent).

quirks.com/articles/2017/20170101.aspx

••• shopper insights
# Targeted mobile offers can reactivate lapsed customers

A study by Spring, a Chicago marketing platform, indicates that retailers that use targeted online incentives can drive shoppers to a brick-and-mortar store and also reactivate lapsed customers, increase the average transaction amount and turn average spenders into top spenders. The study targeted shoppers with mobile offers from large retail brands that consumers connected to their existing debit or credit card and could only be redeemed at brick-and-mortar locations. Sixty-five percent of those who redeemed the offer had not previously spent in the mall; this segment (No Spend Prior to Offer) also had the highest average transaction size – $130.25. The next-highest segment came from the Top 25 Percent of Spenders segment at $78.12. The average transaction size across all segments increased from $63.02 to $98.91, with the Average Spenders segment increasing 114 percent ($22.33 to $47.76). The average program spend per day rose from $6.07 to $21.03 (a 246 percent increase). The average number of transactions per day increased from 0.10 to 0.21 (a 120 percent increase).

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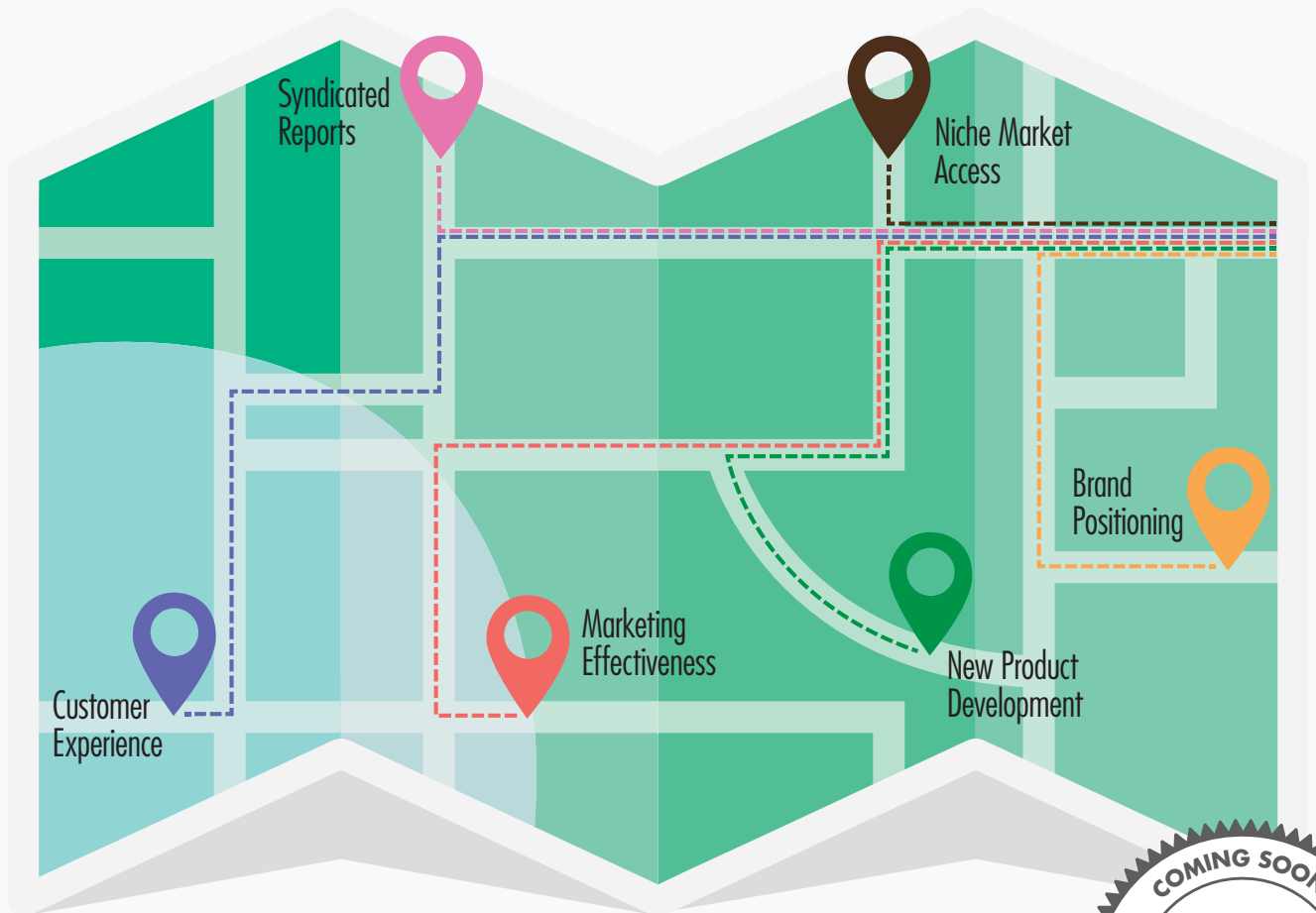
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# GUIDE TO STRATEGIC THINKING

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# Our pledge to you



Joe Rydholm can be reached at joe@quirks.com

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Among the many hot-button issues to emerge from the recent election cycle is the rise of fake news. In an era when almost anyone can post almost anything online without oversight or editorial vetting, we felt like the time was right to offer up a statement of guidelines that we use to operate as a media outlet and as a company.

While I would hope that most of our readers and advertisers already have a sense that we follow the principles outlined here, it just seemed worthwhile to formally state them. After all, I still get the question several times a year while fielding article queries from PR and communications people: "Is there a charge to place an article?" Nope. Our editorial's not for sale. (Note to self: Maybe I've been doing it wrong all these years. Make those checks payable to Joseph Rydholm!)

Plus, in the current reality of the publishing world, where marketers are seeking new and different ways beyond traditional display advertising to connect with readers and get their messages out, we, like most media outlets, are navigating the landscape of paid or sponsored content (see page 11!). And as we do so, it's even more important to reiterate our long-held position that our regular editorial content must be as objective as

possible and also state that we will clearly mark any paid or sponsored content.

I've occasionally had readers (usually on the vendor side) question our editorial objectivity, with some variation of "You publish articles about focus groups written by moderators. How is that

**1. We are objective and independent.** Neither staff members nor shareholders consult for, own shares in or sit as board members on any marketing research firms.

**2. We have no agenda.** We are unashamedly pro-research but because we have no financial stake in any research companies, we have no need to drive the industry in any specific direction.

**3. We are not pay-to-play.** While we could not exist without our valued advertisers, we don't allow them to influence our editorial content in any way. We do not sell or rent our subscriber list.

**4. We are picky.** Articles that appear under the Quirk's banner are chosen on merit and relevance to our core audience of corporate marketing researchers.

**5. We strive for quality.** Our content is vetted and edited by a team of professionally-trained journalists.

**6. We don't chase clicks.** We love healthy SEO numbers for our Web site but we do not publish misleading headlines or substandard content just to get attention.

**7. We clearly mark sponsored content.** Sponsored content can add interest and be a good addition to a publication's regular editorial but readers deserve to know if content is paid-for before they begin reading.

**8. We support the industry.** Everything we do is designed to promote the use, value and understanding of marketing research. So, in addition to providing free access to all of our content and keeping our events cost-effective for corporate researchers to attend, we partner with and/or belong to the MRA, QRCA, ESOMAR and other industry organizations.

**9. We believe in giving back.** For 20+ years we have given money to help support schools, orphanages and clinics in Haiti and Jamaica. Quirk's is also actively involved in the Marketing Research Education Foundation.

**10. We value transparency, honesty and integrity.** In a world of fake news, clandestine business partnerships, questionable data and marketing disguised as information, we want to stand apart.

objective?" Our mission has always been to advance the use and understanding of marketing research and thus we are invariably going to be pro-research in our articles – not the most unbiased position, I grant you. Where we aim for objectivity in editing articles submitted by authors from vendor firms is by eliminating or minimizing any mentions of their company's proprietary products or services. In that way, we can be comfortable, for

example, publishing a piece on best practices for mobile research from an author who works at a firm that sells mobile research capabilities as long as that person keeps things vendor- or product-agnostic.

As I have said in this space many times, Tom Quirk stressed the need for quality and objectivity when he started the magazine in 1986. Those watchwords have served us well so far and I'm confident they will continue to do so. Ⓠ

●●● advice for researchers

# ASK THE EXPERT

Expert answers to important research questions.

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214-365-5000

## What are the best in-survey quality-control questions to help monitor data quality?

A great question because the questionnaire is a powerful tool to improve quality. We tested 15 commonly-used controls and found five which are most effective in identifying poor quality without over-excluding good participants.

- Fact inconsistency (e.g., age and birthdate mismatch)
- Thought inconsistency (e.g., agreed to two opposing statements in a short grid)
- Selection of unlikely, low-incidence options
- Speeder check (< 48 percent of median time)
- Open-end quality check

We recommend implementing a minimum of three of these checks and removing only those who fail at least two.

## Which online qual methodology is right for my project?

Start with two key elements. First, is the topic better-suited for a group discussion or is an individual interview best? Second, you need to decide if a real-time interaction or an asynchronous methodology is appropriate. Pair up the answers for whichever online qual approach makes sense. If a real-time discussion is needed to elicit ideas and collaborate, then choose OLFGs (Webcam or text-based chat). If the subject demands some privacy, and engaging over multiple days will yield the most interesting insights, then an online diary – text or video – is the way to go.

## How do you see automation playing a role in how research is designed and fielded?

Done properly, automation is a powerful tool in the market researcher's arsenal. Upfront planning is essential and automation doesn't eliminate the need for scoping the business question or selecting the proper audience. Using the right survey instrument, either your own or a third-party template, is equally critical. Utilizing templated questionnaires, whether for recurring studies or those more custom in nature, saves time and money. These savings can enable you to conduct research that you would otherwise not be able to and allow you to focus on interpreting results and deriving insights.

Have a question you'd like to have answered? Submit it to info@quirks.com.
Want your firm to be featured as an expert? Contact sales@quirks.com for more information.

••• a digest of survey findings and new tools for researchers

## (Q) // Survey Monitor



••• shopper insights
# Similar but different

### Report compares African-American grocery shopper generations

As detailed in Nielsen's Young, Connected and Black report, cultural traditions involving food are passed from generation to generation within the African-American community. Recipes may vary but there are primary staples that are still reflected in the grocery-buying habits of African-Americans today. For example, African-American shoppers buy fresh meats like pork, chicken and turkey, and vegetables like fresh greens and cabbage at higher rates than non-African-American shoppers.

Black Millennials have similar items in their shopping carts but their penchant for fresh green beans and fresh chicken are notable standouts compared with their non-African-American counterparts.

Additionally, African-American Millennials and older black generations buy more "from scratch" cooking items than non-African Americans. Popular items include shortening and oil; spices, seasonings and extracts; sugar and sugar substitutes; syrups and molasses; baking mixes and unprepared frozen meat and dried vegetables and grains. These are all items that are most commonly found in the meals prepared for dinner tables during the holidays in African-American households. During

holiday seasons, grocers and retailers should consider strategies that bridge traditions with in-store shopping experiences, such as offering live, in-store demos of prepared meals and cross-promoting meal-ready ingredients throughout the store.

When it comes to cooking and dining, African-American Millennials and older black generations have very similar sentiments. Almost three-quarters of both age groups say that during any given week, they frequently cook meals. Both age groups also plan their dinners ahead of time and like to cook with fresh ingredients.

When African-Americans aren't cooking holiday or special-occasion meals, their day-to-day lifestyles influence their cooking habits. Busy African-Americans are on-the-go and they need convenient meal solutions. More than half of African-American Millennials agree that frozen dinners are a convenient alternative for quick meals. And when you consider that 58 percent of African-American Millennials say they often eat meals on the run, it's no surprise that 92 percent of them say they have visited a quick-service restaurant in the past 30 days – a rate that mirrors non-African-American Millennials (91 percent). This need for expedience and convenience explains why African-Americans buy unprepared frozen meats, seafood and vegetables at a higher rate than non-African-Americans. Combining African-Americans' desire for fresh foods and a need for speed provides brands and grocers an opportunity for innovation and new product development in the convenient healthy eating space.

When it comes to shopping channel frequency, African-American Millennials and older generations have different preferences. Black Millennials spend 14 percent more when they shop

quirks.com/articles/2017/20170103.aspx

than older black generations, while older black consumers make more trips, shopping 23 percent more frequently than their younger counterparts.

Convenience and price often dominate African-Americans' purchasing decisions overall but black Millennials shop more frequently at drug stores and dollar stores than the total U.S. population. Collectively, African-Americans make frequent trips to convenience stores, gas and service stations and dollar stores. One thing to keep in mind is that this may not always be about preference, as, in many African-American neighborhoods, these are the closest and sometimes the only store options available. And this is partly why the shelves in these convenient stores often resemble aisles at traditional grocers and other retailers.

Everyone loves a good bargain and African-Americans are no exception. So when it comes to reaching African-American consumers, a cross-platform approach is important. African-Americans of all ages agree that media advertising using multiple sources provides them with meaningful or useful information. But even with a cross-platform approach, advertising on TV is still the most popular source of information about bargains among African-American Millennials and older black generations. A greater percentage of older black consumers say advertising in print media such as magazines and newspapers is a useful source for sales information, while advertising on mobile phones, radio and the Internet stand out for African-American Millennials.

Price is an important factor in many African-Americans' purchasing decisions. Fifty-three percent say they will gladly switch brands to use a coupon and 62 percent say they will purchase store brands or private labels over their usual name-brand items in they're on sale. Seventy-percent agree that generic or store-brand items are as effective as brand name products, which is an attitudinal shift from what Nielsen's previous surveys have found

regarding African-Americans and their brand-loyalty attitudes. Brands should take note of this new reality whereby African-American shoppers are balancing both loyalty and price in their shopping considerations.

While important, price isn't the only factor African-American shoppers consider when making purchases. Both African-American Millennials and older black generations agree at higher rates than their total-population counterparts that a variety of other factors are just as important in their shopping decision criteria, such as celebrity endorsements, the latest trends, friends and family influence and brand image. Black Millennials can also be strong brand advocates and influencers, as 45 percent agree that they like to share their opinions about products and services by posting reviews and ratings online – a rate that is 24 percent higher than total U.S. Millennials.

••• brand research
# Journey-mapping pays for top marketers

**B2B focuses on brand awareness in 2017**

Journey-mapping pays off for marketers, according to findings from the 2016 State of Customer Journey Marketing report by San Francisco digital marketing firm Autopilot. As reported in a Research Brief from the

Center for Media Research, 71 percent of high-performing marketers surveyed by Autopilot for its study have mapped their customers' journey and 88 percent say this initiative is driving better customer acquisition, satisfaction and retention.

High-performing marketers make up 24 percent of the marketers surveyed for the report. Defined as attainers of 80 percent or more of their lead or performance goals, they grow revenue 58 percent faster than everyone else, generate more leads for their companies, are nearly three times happier with their performance and have more satisfied customers. Eighty-eight percent of high-performing marketers get results by investing in customer experience initiatives including analytics, content, social and nurture-based strategies for growth, the report says.

Seventy percent of marketers now rank social media as their top-performing non-e-mail channel and 81 percent are using data to personalize their marketing, with the majority saying it creates a better customer experience.

The high-performers are investing in customer events and marketing, referral and satisfaction programs and analytics and attribution, rather than in online ads, says the report. Sixty-four percent of high-performers send automated e-mails to their contacts at least once a week and automation adoption is up more than 4x in two years.

Cost, not lack of awareness or complexity, is now the main impediment of use, says the report: 48 percent of marketers list budget constraints as their No. 1 challenge. B2B marketers are most concerned with converting leads into sales, while B2C marketers seek high ROI approaches to grow with thin margins and tight budgets.

In 2017, says the report, most marketers will be investing first in online ads (30 percent) and customer events and marketing (30 percent) but

high-performers are focusing more on the customer experience, investing in customer events and marketing (35 percent) and referral and loyalty programs (29 percent) to achieve ROI to drive referrals and repeat purchases.

High-performers are even more focused, in 2017, on brand, with 27 percent ranking it as their top priority, followed distantly by lead-generation (21 percent) and customer satisfaction (19 percent). In contrast, everyone else is more evenly split between growing brand awareness (21.8 percent) and tactical lead-based initiatives such as converting leads into sales (22.1 percent) and generating new leads (18 percent). Among B2B-focused marketers, 43 percent indicated "brand awareness" as the leading priority at more than twice the rate of their second priority, customer satisfaction.



### ••• loyalty research
## Most see loyalty programs as on the level

### Except for Millennials, that is

Thanks to usage of the term by presidential candidates on both sides of the aisle during the recent election, Americans are now asking if everything from the economy, to election results, to international trade is rigged. A nationwide survey of 1,500 U.S. consumers conducted by Cincinnati loyalty research firm Colloquy in October 2016 found that 59 percent say customer reward programs are not rigged, while 41 percent say that points, miles and cash-back programs are rigged.

Colloquy uncovered the 59 percent to 41 percent gap in consumer sentiment about reward programs when it asked for a yes-or-no response to the question: Do you feel that loyalty marketing and customer reward programs are rigged?

In another key result from the survey, 53 percent of young Millennials in the 18-24 age group said reward programs are rigged, a 29 percent increase over the general population. Just 37 percent of older Millennials in the 25-34 age range said reward programs are rigged.

In the survey, Colloquy asked respondents who benefits most from customer reward programs. Savvy shoppers topped the list at 34.5 percent, followed by credit card companies at 27 percent, brands at 26.5 percent and wealthy people at 12 percent.

"In an atmosphere where venerable institutions are being questioned, it should be reassuring to marketers that nearly 60 percent of consumers believe in their programs and that consumers identified smart shoppers as the chief beneficiaries," says Colloquy Editor-in-Chief Jeff Berry. "At the same time, the survey should remind brands that rewards must be relevant, easy to earn and redeem and that they must uphold the value exchange."

Elsewhere in the survey, Colloquy crosstabulated results to compare views based on political party leanings. Forty-eight percent of consumers who identified themselves as Republicans said reward programs are rigged, versus 30 percent of respondents who said they are Democrats.

More women (43 percent) than men (40 percent) said reward programs are rigged.

Seventy-six percent of consumers said they plan to make no changes in their level of participation in reward programs in 2017, while 12 percent said they'll participate more, and 12 percent said they'll participate less.

*Colloquy's consumer survey was conducted between October 17-21, 2016. The nationwide survey of 1,500 U.S. consumers has a margin of error, which measures sampling variability, of +/- 2.5 at the 95 percent confidence level.*



### ••• consumer psychology
## Stressed-out shoppers seek to restore control

### No time for splurging

As reported by Dory Devlin in *Rutgers Today*, a study co-authored by Kristina Durante, an associate professor of marketing at Rutgers Business School, indicates that stress leads consumers to favor saving money. Durante, who researches the effect of hormones and consumer behavior, has found that although stressed consumers want to save, when faced with a spending decision, stressed consumers will pay for necessities they think will help restore control rather than splurge on non-necessities.

In the study, The Effect of Stress on Consumer Saving and Spending,

published in the *Journal of Marketing Research* in October 2016, Durante and Juliano Laran of the University of Miami found that stress leads consumers to save money in general but spend strategically on products they believe are essential.

In several experiments, Durante and Laran created stressful situations for participants, including leading them to believe they would give presentations in front of judges and directing others to write about a stressful time in their lives. Faced with the stress alone, most say they wanted to save more money.

Durante says the body reacts to stressful challenges with an increase in the hormone cortisol, which leads us to focus our attention toward the threat so that we can attempt to overcome it or alleviate it. "People lock down and enter survival mode and protect resources as a means to ensure survival," she says.

When researchers tasked stressed participants with making a decision about how to spend up to $250 – one group on everyday products and necessary household goods, the other on non-necessities including entertainment goods – the group buying items deemed necessary spent more money. Neither group spent all of the $250.

In another experiment, researchers restored a sense of control for one group before asking them about spending money by having them write about an instance in their life where their actions led to a good outcome. That group spent more money on purchases. "What we found was for those with momentary levels of acute stress who then go and make a decision about how to spend their money, they want to save their money," Durante says. "But for those who were stressed out and then had their sense of control restored, we found they were more willing to spend their money."

The roots of the stress matter. People who said they were stressed about a current job situation, for example, were less likely to spend money on clothes, while others stressed about starting a new job were more likely to spend money on new clothes because they perceived the purchases as helping alleviate new-job stress. "What people feel is a necessity shifts depending on what kind of stress they have," Durante says.

Having some control versus no control seems to affect the buying decisions people make when they are stressed, she says. "You can have situations where stress and a high level of control can improve your performance, like it does for elite athletes. But if you have a high level of stress and a low level of control, that's when our cognitive efforts can get impaired and we want to save."

The implications for marketers are many, Durante says. When there are unpredictable situations – extreme weather, elections – consumers may be more open to products that are framed as necessities or those that can restore control, she says.

For consumers, the findings can help people be aware of how they react when they are stressed and making buying decisions. "When humans are stressed, we still have to go out and about," Durante says. "We have a lot of consumers out there who are stressed and are faced with decisions about what to purchase."

Stress is unavoidable in life, yet research on how stressful situations affect how people make spending decisions as levels of the stress hormone cortisol are rising is limited and the findings mixed, Durante says. This research, she notes, is a start. "Not a lot of research has been done on stress and spending," Durante says. "It's so nuanced because different people respond in different ways." The researchers are in the midst of a follow-up study on how consumers engage with products during a stressful time.



••• financial services

## I choose to save, you choose to spend

### How Boomers vs. Millennials view money

First comes love, then comes marriage, then comes the inevitable conversation about money. The TD Ameritrade Millennials and Money Survey examines the relationships between savers and spenders and the financial considerations taken when choosing a potential spouse. The survey also reveals some key differences in financial habits between men and women.

Of the more than 2,100 American adults surveyed:

The majority of savers prefer a spouse who is also a saver (61 percent saver men, 60 percent saver women).

A majority of spender women (59 percent) married a saver spouse, as opposed to 39 percent of spender men with a saver spouse.

One benefit six in 10 savers noted for being married to another saver is that it prevents arguments.

Does the saver/spender distinction matter more later in life? Two-thirds of Boomer savers are married to savers, compared to 52 percent of Millennial savers. Forty percent of

Boomer savers say they would not be happy in a relationship with a spender vs. 23 percent of Millennial savers.

"It's more about attaining the right balance than finding an identical match," says Matt Sadowsky, director of retirement at TD Ameritrade. "It becomes more and more important over time for spouses to be aligned on how to manage their finances, especially when they are living off their nest egg in retirement. It's not critical that both spouses be spenders or both be savers. But it is critical that there is an open dialogue between the two about what retirement looks like for them and a shared vision and plan for their future."

Sixty percent of Millennial savers say they save in order to meet their financial goals. While Millennial men and women share several common long-term goals including saving for a retirement, 56 percent of Millennial women save for non-retirement items versus 46 percent of Millennial men.

More Millennial women said saving for a vacation is top of their list (69 percent), while 49 percent of Millennial men are concerned with affording a vacation. Millennial men are more likely to put a vacation on their credit card (22 percent vs. 19 percent of women).

Millennial women appear to be more concerned with the potential for a financial disruption, with 62 percent saving for an emergency vs. 50 percent of Millennial men.

Twenty-nine percent of Millennial men are investing in the stock market, which significantly outweighs the 18 percent of Millennial women. About one-third of Millennials are saving for a down payment on a home (32 percent Millennial women, 27 percent Millennial men).

Millennial and Boomer women have different attitudes toward money. Boomer women are more financially conservative and strict about saving, whereas Millennial women are more like men in how they save, spend and help support their families.

Millennial women save to help their families (58 percent), while Boomer women mostly save for themselves with only 37 percent saving to help their families.

Fifty-three percent of Millennial women are most anxious about having debt vs. 39 percent of Boomer women. Millennial women (41 percent) would choose to spend $200 on an experience they enjoy vs. 28 percent of Boomer women.

While Millennial men and Boomer men are similar in how they spend, the older men save more and allocate more money to family-related expenses. Millennial men feel the greatest pressure to spend and generally need the most money in order to be happy.

At an average of $925 a month, Boomer men save the most for retirement followed by Millennial men at an average of $593. Boomer men spend $130 more per month on groceries than Millennial men, $105 more on utilities, $45 more on technology and $50 on eating out and entertainment.

More Millennial men (18 percent) like to spend money in order to make a good impression vs. 3 percent of Boomer men. Millennial men need the most money in order to be happy saying they require a minimum income of $73,000.

"Millennial men's spending habits are vastly different from their female partners. Men want to enjoy life by spending money now because they're confident they can make up the money later," says Dara Luber, senior manager of retirement at TD Ameritrade. "Women appear to have more anxiety over spending and fear they will not be able to make up a gap in their savings. Part of this reason could be their fear of debt since they tend to earn less over their lifetime."

# Product and Service Update

### ●●● text analytics

## Lexalytics releases text analytics add-in for Excel

**Filter by NPS, connect to SurveyMonkey**

Boston-based text analytics solutions firm Lexalytics has released Semantria for Excel 5.0, a text analytics add-in for Microsoft Excel. It allows market research professionals and business analysts to analyze structured and unstructured survey data generated from third-party online survey companies or formats like SPSS or Triple-S XML. Users can: filter by Net Promoter Score based on survey responses and correlate those scores to the unstructured data of actual customer or employee comments; connect to SurveyMonkey to import survey data for quick analysis; determine sentiment – the positive, negative or neutral tones to each theme, entity and category embedded in the content to better understand market position; customize or tune each feature, including categorization, context determination, entity extraction and sentiment analysis;

analyze content in a majority of languages spoken worldwide; automatically extract entities, i.e., people, places, companies, brands, @mentions, #hashtags and job titles from content to see who or what is most talked about and who is not; and create data visualizations with reports, word clouds, graphs, charts and more. It is currently available and compatible with the latest version of Excel for Windows.
www.lexalytics.com

### ●●● segmentation

## IRI and SSI alliance targets purchase behaviors

**A focus on Millennials**

Chicago researcher IRI has formed a new alliance with Survey Sampling International (SSI), Shelton, Conn., through which SSI's U.S. consumer panelists can be classified by IRI's consumer and shopper segmentations, such as e-commerce behavior with IRI e-ShopperLink and the purchase dynamics of Millennials with IRI MillenniaLink to create on-demand, targeted and personalized analyses.

For the past two years, IRI conducted surveys among Millennials and online shoppers to understand motivations among these groups of consumers, who are increasingly important to manufacturers and retailers. Through SSI's on-demand targeting capabilities, IRI will now be able to classify respondents from SSI's panel into various segments of the population based on their characteristics of actual behavior in virtually real time, followed immediately with more in-depth questions intended to address specific business issues.

To understand differences within this group, IRI surveyed Millennials

from the United States about their attitudes and behaviors across all facets of their lives. IRI's research revealed that Millennials fall into six targetable segments that offer different leverageable opportunities for manufacturer and retailer business growth. The six segments reflect an array of lifestyle attitudes, social connection, confidence, health and wellness, financial habits, shopping styles, and digital savvy that exist among Millennials.

According to a BI Intelligence report, e-grocery sales are expected to grow by 21 percent annually through 2018. Companies that want to harness that growth will require a keen eye toward targeting the right people, in the right way, with the right product offerings and messages. IRI updated its survey among U.S. consumers about their online shopping attitudes and behaviors to improve understanding of online trends for CPG manufacturers and retailers. Through the survey results, IRI identified six segments that reflect an array of online shopping attitudes, drivers, shopping styles and mobile usage for shopping online for specific grocery categories.

By expanding IRI's e-ShopperLink and MillenniaLink segmentation data to SSI panelists, marketers can conduct a range of survey types such as concept and product testing and ad testing. By classifying consumers based on IRI's syndicated segmentations, CPG clients will have more flexibility in the types of surveys and questions they can ask and a broader, more targeted base of potential respondents.
www.iriworldwide.com

### ●●● Briefly...

■ Canada-based text analytics software firm Provalis Research has released QDA Miner 5 (Qualitative Data Analysis). This version provides enhanced data portability, better analysis of unstructured text and increased visualization capabilities.
provalisresearch.com

■ U.K. software firm company Sensum

has launched the next generation of its Sensum Insights neuromarketing solution, which now includes facial recognition, eye-tracking and implicit testing technology to help brands build a 360-degree view of audience's emotional responses to content, experiences and products.
sensum.co

■ Kantar Media, London, and VINEX, a group of Netherlands online publishers, have delivered a new panel for Internet audience measurement, replacing the previous Internet measurement contract operated by GfK. The panel (Project NOBO), which uses technology from comScore and Kantar Media to measure online behavior on browsers and apps, is the result of an alliance between VINEX and SKO, a Netherlands TV and video ratings body. The new panel includes all Internet traffic and page content from participating publishers, with other sites to be added in early 2017, including Facebook, Google, Netflix and YouTube.
www.kantarmedia.com

■ Experian Marketing Services, New York, has partnered with Boulder, Colo., social media insights firm SpotRight to provide Social Media Analysis, a visualization tool that uses Experian's consumer demographic and lifestyle data and SpotRight's social media relationships to help marketers better understand the social influence, brand behavior, following activity, competitor overlap and demographic information of their target audiences.
www.experian.com/marketing-services spotright.com

■ Oslo, Norway, research firm Confirmit has partnered with U.K. video intelligence software firm LivingLens to offer video capture and analysis within Confirmit Horizons for market research studies, voice of the customer programs and voice of the employee programs. The partnership enables Confirmit customers to carry out video data collection and analysis and combine results with existing feedback and research methods.
www.confirmit.com

■ European mobile loyalty wal-

let application FidMe and Shelton, Conn., researcher SSI have launched a new loyalty program, My Opinion Club. The program allows FidMe users to earn points by participating in mobile surveys and sharing their opinions. SSI teamed up with FidMe to expand SSI's mobile panel membership in Europe.
www.surveysampling.com

■ Overland Park, Kan., pharmaceutical marketing agency Intouch Solutions has expanded its analytics practice with a new Decision Science unit. The new unit will exist as a subset of Intouch's analytics team and will partner with the firm's health care clients to review data, conduct exploratory analyses and develop models that answer business questions.
www.intouchsol.com

■ Sweden-based eye-tracking research solutions firm Tobii Pro has launched Tobii Pro Spectrum, an eye tracker, and Tobii Pro Lab, a new biometric research software for behavioral research.
www.tobiipro.com

■ Redwood City, Calif., audience technology company YuMe Inc. and Nielsen, New York, have released a new neuroscience-informed research report showing how virtual reality platforms give marketers the potential to deliver experiences that can elicit strong emotional engagement. It also reinforced the need to align content with the right platform to produce optimal consumer engagement.
www.yume.com
www.nielsen.com

■ Nielsen, New York, has launched the Nielsen Shopper Essentials Suite, a Web-based data visualization and analysis solution that provides a complete view of shoppers across retail channels and categories, allowing clients to make real-time decisions to drive growth outcomes.
www.nielsen.com

■ Denver-based research solutions firm GutCheck has introduced Feature Prioritizer and Agile Attitudes & Usage (A&U), two new additions to a suite of products that allow clients to receive feedback from target audiences. Feature

Prioritizer is a quantitative analysis that categorizes customer satisfaction with product features using the Kano Model, while an Agile A&U is a quantitative study that analyzes consumers' attitudes, usage and behaviors in two weeks, allowing clients to check in with audiences more frequently.
www.gutcheckit.com

■ Digital incentives company Rybbon has partnered with Palo Alto, Calif., firm SurveyMonkey to offer Rybbon for SurveyMonkey, an automated way to send survey rewards. Researchers tell Rybbon which reward to send when a person completes a survey and Rybbon's integration with SurveyMonkey e-mails the reward automatically upon survey completion.
www.rybbon.net

■ Oslo, Norway, research firm Confirmit has introduced Confirmit FastTrack for Contact Centers, a customer feedback solution that uses insights and operational metrics to help drive improvements in contact center performance and deliver a fast return on investment.
www.confirmit.com

■ In Minneapolis, Metametrix, a new venture from data and analytics industry veterans, has launched. The subscription-based software-as-a-service platform uses proprietary search algorithms to provide detail, analysis and insight for marketers.
metametrixdata.com

■ Nielsen, New York, has launched Digital Ad Ratings Publisher Insights, allowing digital publishers to analyze advertising campaign data to articulate the value proposition of their audiences and properties.
www.nielsen.com

■ Marketing software company Bridg, Los Angeles, has launched Bridg Enhanced CRM, a customer relationship management solution for restaurant brands. The solution combines disparate customer data silos, including point-of-sale, e-mail, loyalty, online ordering and more, into a unified view of individual customers, revealing comp growth opportunities.
bridg.com

# How to price an island

| By Michael Lieberman

**snapshot**

Michael Lieberman offers a cruise line example to illustrate how to use discrete choice to determine marginal value.

Aquatica Caribbean is a fictional cruise line based in Florida and incorporated in Bermuda. It is a mid-market vacation enterprise that emphasizes quality and easy fun at relatively affordable rates. Still, Aquatica Caribbean noticed its core demographic was over age 50 and decided to add a new feature, Pirate Cay, to attract more families.

Aquatica Caribbean cruise ships would make stopovers on this fake pirate hideout, where parents could disembark their floating hotel, enjoy a buffet lunch, perhaps explore the isolated atoll with their children, pretending they were shipwrecked or watching out for the royal navy during the heyday of rum-running.

The company purchased a deserted Bahamian island as the site for Pirate Cay. After the purchase Aquatica Caribbean needed to add significant infrastructure to Pirate Cay such as constructing a shopping hub, a water play area in what appears to be the remnants of a washed-away beach dwelling, a hub of youth activities supervised by Aquatica Caribbean counselors, barges and a sea charter dock for boating activities, a grouper game pavilion, fins and boats and a snorkeling lagoon.

What Aquatica Caribbean is not offering are overnight stays on Pirate Cay. The operational considerations alone would make overnights a much more complicated venture and would involve constructing accommodations that are up to the company's standards, expanded dining facilities, a nightly fireworks show and overnight activities. More basically, where would the housekeeping and kitchen staffs sleep?

Aquatica Caribbean would like to determine the marginal value of Pirate Cay. How much could the company charge patrons who wished to pad around this private paradise? Would they be willing to shell out an extra fee?

In short, what is the value of Pirate Cay to company-wide revenue?

## Many moving parts

While on the surface, pricing Pirate Cay might seem a simple exercise, in fact there are many moving parts to the questionnaire. For example, each tier of customer must be analyzed differently. Below is an example list of Aquatica Caribbean tiers given to us by the client.

Tier 1: First-Time Adventurer
Tier 2: Explorers Club
Tier 3: Adventure Travelers
Tier 4: Officers Club
Tier 5: Captain's Circle

There are several major types of conjoint analysis, including traditional conjoint. The primary reason to deploy a traditional conjoint is in product design. There is also choice-based conjoint, also known as discrete choice. A discrete choice model is used when products exist and we are looking for choice and price functions for various brands. Discrete choice can also accommodate existing features, such as sea, mountains or land, and work them into the choice function.

Consumers do not make decisions in a vacuum. So, in order for Aquatica Caribbean to
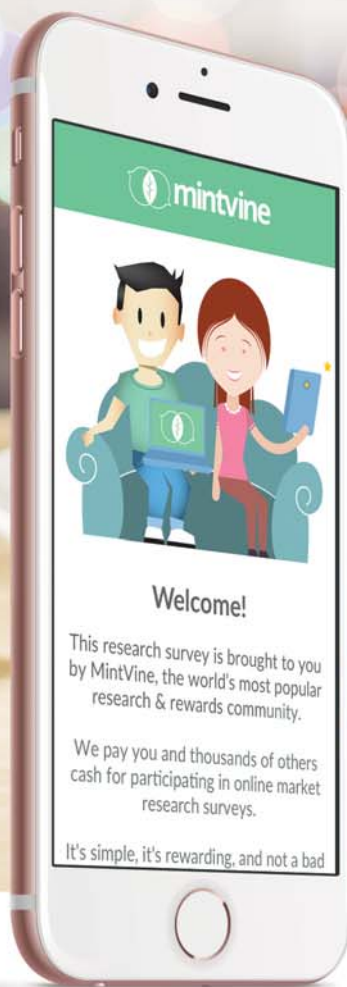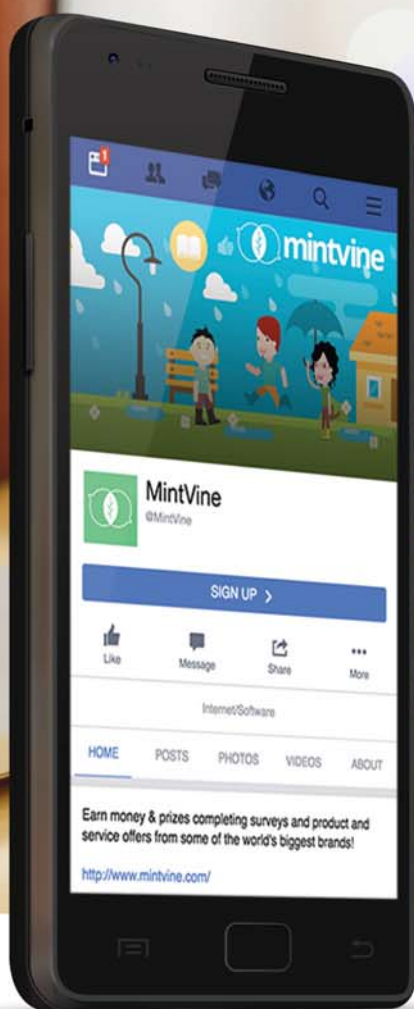
Figure 1

| Annual Number of Cruise Ship Passengers | 20,335,000 |
|---|---|
| Percent of Cruises in the Caribbean | 37% |
| Aquatica Caribbean Cruises Market Share | 12% |

| Base Aquatica Caribbean Annual Passengers | 933,474 |
|---|---|

| Aquatica Caribbean Tiers | | Annual Tier Visitors | Calculated Value of Pirate Cay | Estimated Added Value of Pirate Cay |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| First Time Adventurer | 34% | 317,381 | $69 | $21,899,303 |
| Explorers Club | 24% | 224,034 | $78 | $17,474,635 |
| Adventure Travelers | 22% | 205,364 | $54 | $11,089,672 |
| Officers Club | 14% | 130,686 | $32 | $4,181,964 |
| Captain's Circle | 6% | 56,008 | $0 | $0 |

| Total Estimated Added Value of Pirate Cay | $54,645,574 |
|---|---|

Table 1

| Aquatica Tier Membership | | Calculated Value of Pirate Cay |
|---|---|---|
| Tier 1 | First Time Adventurer | $69 |
| Tier 2 | Explorers Club | $78 |
| Tier 3 | Adventure Travelers | $54 |
| Tier 4 | Officers Club | $32 |
| Tier 5 | Captain's Circle | $0 |

assess the true addition value of Pirate Cay, we suggested that other add-ons be shown in the survey. In addition to producing a better gauge on the value of Pirate Cay, Aquatica Caribbean would be able to test other potential options and produce a relatively robust price model for its cruise line in general.

Below are the other features that Aquatica Caribbean wanted included in the model.

• A Day of Adventure on Pirate Cay
• All the Magic Your Kids Can Learn!
• All You Can Yoga!
• Bowling Anyone?
• Complimentary alcoholic beverages
• Pirate Cay Action Adventure Water Day
• Price – five incremental additions with different combinations of extra activities

Look closely and you'll notice that Pirate Cay is included in two features. Given that we write the conjoint syntax windows, we are able to take multiple features but create one Pirate Cay variable. We are also able to do a variable for children's activities, free features, fishing, etc.

## Estimate choice probabilities

A discrete choice model uses a multinomial logistic regression technique that produces coefficients for each level of service and, in turn, likelihood percentages to estimate choice probabilities. The model outputs exponential utility scores that can be used to produce the desired output – in other words, optimal pricing, market share and choice measurements.

However, if we programmed a full design with each variable and price level, there would be literally thousands of attributes and levels. It is impossible to test all combinations, so we have to choose a subset.

The aim is to create a mathematically valid, smallest-manageable combination of potential profiles. These small number of are known as orthogonal designs. Rather than showing thousands of combinations, a much smaller number – typically less than 20 – could be shown, knowing that the statistical analysis at the end would be able to separate out the main effects from the design.

What we were looking for was a design that was balanced – each level in each attribute appears the same number of times – and one which was

orthogonal. We take a pair of levels, one from one attribute and one from another attribute, and the pairs appear the same number of times in the design.

In a choice exercise for the Pirate Cay study, respondents might see 12-16 options of combinations of features such as A Day of Adventure on Pirate Cay, Bowling Anyone? or complimentary alcholic beverages. They are asked to select one and are then asked, "On a 1-to-10 scale, how likely would you be to take this Aquatica Caribbean cruise within the next 12 months?" There would be many scenarios run, different variations for higher tiers, and the prices would differ by tier, cruise length, Caribbean destinations or accommodation type.

The next step would be to calculate choice and price functions for each activity plus the base package. To accurately assess Pirate Cay, it is best to do this by tier, a stratified model. The base package, and then the base package plus one activity would each receive these functions via the discrete choice process.

## Brand image

Equalization pricing is a method to determine the value of brand equity. Equalization pricing can be calculated for the aggregate dollar value of the brand image that interests us. It can also be deployed to determine marginal values of activities.

For the Pirate Cay study, we will employ equalization pricing – what

I call balancing – to determine the value of Pirate Cay for each tier of Aquatica Caribbean customer. We will then perform a Monte Carlo simulation to determine the added revenue, or "value" of Pirate Cay.

Balancing is performed like this: After calculating the model we produce a simulator. The simulator will have the base package with a price pinwheel and then the base package with Pirate Cay (and a price pinwheel), base package with All You Can Yoga, etc. The simulator has a drop-down to determine which tier is being tested and checkboxes to take an activity on or off the model. We have not included the prices in our examples because they differ by tiers.

The next stage is to experiment with the baseline tier package until it reaches an equal market share with the baseline tier package and Pirate Cay. The method is to check "baseline tier package" and "baseline tier package with Pirate Cay" only, leaving the other activities unchecked. We set the baseline tier package price ($3,000 for two adults for three days, leaving from Miami and going to the Bahamas). Then juggle the "baseline tier package with Pirate Cay" price wheel until it is at 50 percent with the baseline. The difference is the value of Pirate Cay. That is, the amount over baseline tier passengers would expect to pay for a visit to Pirate Cay (Table 1).

At first the results shown in the table might seem counterintuitive. Why would the less-expensive cruises have a higher marginal value for Pirate Cay than the more exclusive tiers?

The reason is that higher tiers have higher base prices and added luxuries (e.g., staterooms), tend to be older (fewer children) and are paying a premium and expect a more all-inclusive approach cruise. Seniors are not as likely to want to snorkel around a Pirate Cay.

Also, the model serves as a suggested price for Aquatica Caribbean for Pirate Cay. In a sense we are not just calculating a value but performing a pricing study as well.

## Forecast model

The last step in the project is to fit the results into a forecast model to formulate an idea of how much Pirate Cay is worth on an annual basis. We are going to use input from the Cruise Ship Industry Statistics, then filter by Aquatica Caribbean market share and then by tier. Pirate Cay operation costs are not included in our model.

A snapshot of results is shown in Figure 1. This chart shows the estimated added value of Pirate Cay to be about $54.6 million. This is, in fact, a healthy return. However, given the original investment in the island, infrastructure improvements and operating costs, Pirate Cay will, in fact, not be profitable for several years.

However, with a rise in Aquatica Caribbean interest among younger cruisers with children, removing Pirate Cay from the itinerary would a strategic error for the company, particularly when competing with other family-oriented cruise lines such as Disney, Royal Caribbean and Carnival Cruise Lines. ⓞ

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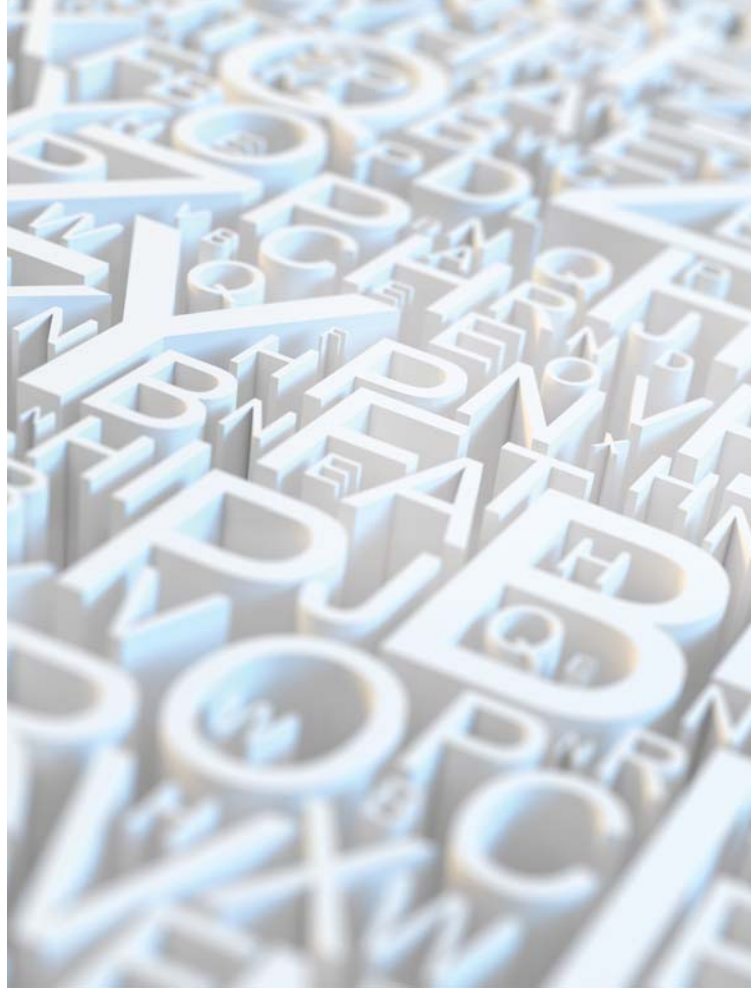
# Scaling the data mountain

## A practitioner's guide to unlocking insights from customer feedback

| By Rick Kieser and Kellan Williams

**snapshot**

Text analysis is certainly important and worthwhile, the authors argue, but before a business starts mining data, it needs to have a structured plan in place.

quirks.com/articles/2017/20170106.aspx

The mountains of data continue to grow ever higher as the world becomes more digital and connected. From sources such as social media, customer surveys, comments on the Web, etc., data is growing at a 40 percent compound annual rate, which means that the data being generated by 2020 will be more than 64 times the amount of grains of sand on all the beaches on Earth! The vast majority of what's being generated falls under the classification of unstructured data, which requires new methods to quickly understand the meaning of what consumers or customers are talking about. (Unstructured data is information that either does not have a predefined data model or is not organized in a predefined manner. Unstructured information is typically text-heavy but may contain data such as dates, numbers and facts as well.)

Does your company have customer satisfaction or NPS surveys that ask open-ended questions, allowing the customer to reply in free-form text? Does your business have social media pages or Web forums? Nearly all companies do. After all, good businesses want to understand how customers feel about their interaction with different parts of their organizations and the information generated by these sources is invaluable in understanding the voice of the customer and tailoring the customer experience to exceed expectations.

This brings us to the problem that great companies have faced since they started trying to listen to the voice of the customer: dealing with the comments in a way that allows the business to understand what the customers are saying. Historically, most companies dealt with this by having a few employees read through the comments and try to haphazardly describe what the customer expressed in their verbatims. While being marginally effective for small amounts of comments, this method is very time-consuming, expensive and labor-intensive. While the human brain is the best tool to quickly understand what a comment is saying and to quantify the varying degrees
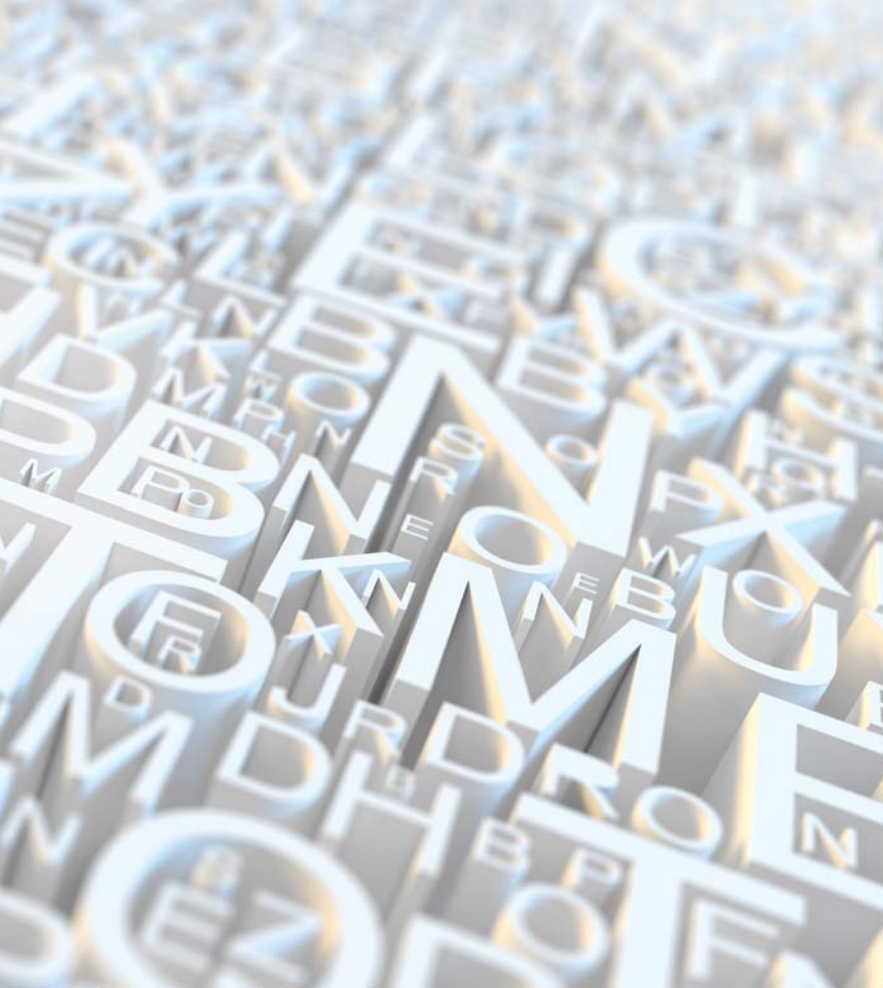
of satisfaction, there is one flaw to using this marvelous tool: Each human processes a comment they read based on their experiences, feelings, understanding and personal context. Two people reading the same comment can have very different opinions about what it is really saying. This more random method is not very repeatable or even comparable. There are some companies that create very large codebooks and have skilled individuals reading the comments and applying this predetermined framework. These companies may also use a specific coding tool that helps in sticking to the predetermined methodology. Although time-consuming, this method can be very effective and is necessary when extreme accuracy is required.

Is there a new solution to this age-old problem? A technology called natural language processing or NLP is changing the game and enabling businesses to understand the voice of the customer like never before.

NLP is the use of algorithms that allow computers to process and understand human languages. While NLP has been around since 1950s, modern programs and products aimed at helping businesses of any size have become more readily available in the past 10 years. What are the benefits of using one of the many NLP products currently available? The algorithms they employ deliver a scientific and repeatable method of dealing with unstructured verbatims. The practical use of NLP to analyze data is also defined as text analytics.

Two of the most-used outputs of NLP/text analytics tools are concept and sentiment analysis. Concept analysis algorithms simply go through the verbatims and look for common themes or subjects being used. This can be helpful, for instance, to quickly see what are the most talked-about subjects in your most recent customer satisfaction survey or Facebook posts. Sentiment analysis takes things a step further and looks for how people are talking about the themes and concepts to assign a positive or negative score to what is being said. Many tools use a five-point scale to show the varying degree of positive or negative sentiment tied to the verbatim being analyzed.

As you can imagine, there are many tools that have very different ways of looking for and applying sentiment to verbatims. Some look at the whole verbatim or comment and give a total score. This can be effective at times but if there are several concepts or themes in one comment, looking at the comment as a whole could marginalize what the customer is actually saying. So, when looking at tools available, ensure that the NLP engine is breaking down the verbatims in a way that will enable you to extract insights from what is being said.

For example: "I love my boat but the cost of maintenance really stinks!" In this instance, there are two clearly-defined concepts or mentions you'd want to analyze and assign sentiment to. The first one – "I love my boat" – would find the word "boat" and assign the use of the word "love" to "boat," which is classified as a positive sentiment. For the second mention – "cost of maintenance really stinks" – the algorithm would find the phrase "cost of maintenance" and assign "really stinks" to that phrase. "Really stinks" would be classified as a negative sentiment associated with "cost of maintenance." If you looked at the sentence as a whole it would look like a neutral comment because there are both negative and positive sentiments being expressed. The more effective tools would break these mentions out to make sure the sentiment doesn't get neutralized. To get the true meaning of the sentiment expressed you would want to see both the positive sentiment in regard to the mention of "my boat" and the negative sentiment associated with "cost of maintenance."

## Methodical approach

Of course, not all tools are created equal. In order to gain insights, consider a tool that allows intuitive and simple grouping of the key concepts to create impactful key categories that are important to your business. Use one that goes past charts and graphs to provide quantitative ways to extract insights from your data. To be sure, charts and graphs are great, but to truly gain insights from your

Figure 1



**Text Analytics Sentiment Model**

| REGION_DESC | (All) | | REGION_DESC | (All) |
| DIVISION_DESC | (All) | | DIVISION_DESC | (All) |
| MARKET_DESC | (All) | | MARKET_DESC | (All) |
| LOCATION_DESC | (All) | | LOCATION_DESC | (All) |
| LOCATION_STATE | OH | ← | LOCATION_STATE | FL | ← |
| METHOD_OF_SERVICE | (All) | | METHOD_OF_SERVICE | (All) |
| PART_TYPE | (All) | | PART_TYPE | (All) |
| INTERACTION | >1 | | INTERACTION | >1 |
| NPS_ANSWER | (All) | | NPS_ANSWER | (All) |
| ACCOUNT_MAJOR | (All) | | ACCOUNT_MAJOR | (All) |
| FISCAL_QUARTER_NAME | (All) | | FISCAL_QUARTER_NAME | (All) |
| FISCAL_WEEK_NAME | (All) | | FISCAL_WEEK_NAME | (All) |

| Row Labels | Mentions | Sentiment Score | Average of NPS |
|---|---|---|---|
| service | 465 | 1.57 | 9.72 |
| Installation/Repair Job | 238 | 1.71 | 9.68 |
| Perception of Employees | 212 | 1.50 | 9.85 |
| Timeliness | 86 | 1.30 | 9.70 |
| experience | 86 | 1.23 | 9.27 |
| process | 84 | 1.26 | 9.73 |
| work | 84 | 1.49 | 9.70 |
| communication | 44 | 1.68 | 9.84 |
| Facilities | 32 | 1.06 | 9.31 |
| repair | 31 | 0.97 | 8.16 |
| scheduling/appointment | 31 | 1.13 | 9.87 |
| price | 30 | 0.87 | 9.93 |
| TV Ads | 26 | 1.28 | 8.92 |
| Company Brand | 26 | 1.69 | 9.62 |
| Other Product Comments | 19 | 0.84 | 8.42 |
| results | 17 | 1.65 | 9.94 |
| quality | 12 | 0.50 | 7.33 |
| Overall Sentiment* | | 1.44 | 9.62 |

| Row Labels | Mentions | Sentiment Score | Average of NPS | Sentiment Var | Sentiment % Var |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| service | 764 | 1.88 | 9.78 | 0.31 | 20% |
| Installation/Repair Job | 503 | 1.75 | 9.87 | 0.04 | 2% |
| Perception of Employees | 284 | 1.57 | 9.84 | 0.07 | 4% |
| Timeliness | 136 | 1.30 | 9.79 | 0.00 | 0% |
| work | 126 | 1.56 | 9.70 | 0.07 | 5% |
| experience | 101 | 1.39 | 9.76 | 0.16 | 13% |
| process | 94 | 1.39 | 9.79 | 0.13 | 10% |
| communication | 66 | 1.67 | 9.56 | -0.01 | -1% |
| scheduling/appointment | 48 | 1.20 | 9.44 | 0.07 | 6% |
| Company Brand | 46 | 1.69 | 9.63 | 0.00 | 0% |
| repair | 43 | 1.00 | 8.40 | 0.03 | 3% |
| Other Product Comments | 42 | 0.81 | 8.88 | -0.03 | -4% |
| TV Ads | 36 | 1.23 | 8.08 | -0.05 | -4% |
| quality | 36 | 0.54 | 9.14 | 0.04 | 8% |
| results | 28 | 1.58 | 8.96 | -0.07 | -4% |
| price | 26 | 0.92 | 9.73 | 0.06 | 7% |
| Facilities | 18 | 1.10 | 9.78 | 0.04 | 3% |
| Overall Sentiment* | | 1.50 | 9.71 | 0.07 | 5% |

*Sentiment Score on a Scale from -2.0 - +2.0

data requires a methodical approach to understanding the context to extract insights.

Here are key steps to getting insights out of text analytics:

• Develop a taxonomy. Set up key word groupings that are important to business strategy or core business competencies.

• Know the business and keep it simple. Don't get too granular with the number of key groupings you are analyzing. Too much detail will make it hard to compare and gain insights from the text.

• Leverage experienced personnel. Make sure the person creating these key word groupings has a fundamental understanding of the current and future strategies and core business competencies.

• Use closed-ended variables to know the context. Attach as many useful variables to the verbatim comments as are available – for example, the day of week they interacted with your business; the product they purchased; where they live; the price they paid; the NPS score – and leverage these contextual variables to answer business questions and drive insights.
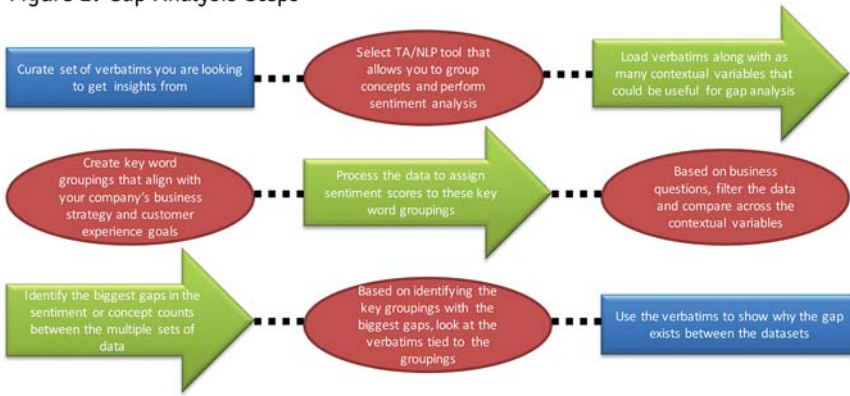
## Understand context

Just as with any metric, a sentiment score is not very useful unless you understand the context of why that score was given. For example,

knowing that a comment has strong positive sentiment in regard to the mention of service is nice but without context it is more of a fact than it is an insight. However, if you know that the comment has strong positive sentiment on service and that the customer lives in Ohio, paid full price for the service and has used your service three times before, now you have some context!

The example depicts what we would call the base layer of being able to start getting insights from text analytics. Where you really start getting the power out of it is by next understanding how the key groupings score on sentiment or concept count in relation to the contextual variables. So, once you have the verbatims processed and grouped by key terms important to your business, use the contextual variables as filters to compare the sentiment or concepts being used by your customers. This way, you can quickly find the gaps in how certain segments or demographic groups feel about the interactions they have with your business.

Building on the previous example of the customer in Ohio, with the method we just discussed, how insightful would it be to understand that customers in Ohio who have used your service more than once score 20 percent higher on sentiment around service than customers in Florida with the same prior interaction with

your business?

This step of identifying the gaps in the sentiment, or where different key groupings demonstrate an over- or under-index relative to the contextual variables, points you to where the real gold is in this treasure hunt for insights. After identifying the groupings that have the largest-percentage variance you now can look at the underlying comments/mentions to get the true meaning of why there is a variance and understand the real cause of the positive or negative sentiment expressed by your customers.

Returning to our scenario, after understanding that customers in Ohio have higher sentiment in regards to service, you can analyze the verbatims and find out the why. You quickly see that customers are pleased with the overall speed of service and the service mind-set of the managers they interacted with. In comparison, by looking at the same comments for Florida customers (Figure 1), you uncover that many customers are talking about the service delays they had due to long lines in several locations. You also find many customers talking about managers doing little to meet their expectations. How could this information be useful? This may inform possible areas for capital investment in new locations to meet the customer demand. It may also point to possible cross-training opportunities or best-practice sharing between the Ohio and Florida managers.

Having a repeatable methodology (Figure 2) is important if you want to compare different datasets or look at how sentiment or what customers are saying over time. Another huge benefit of modern text analytics tools is that once you create your key taxonomies, the tool will consistently group and assess sentiment the same way every time. This consistency is important, and as we discussed earlier, lack of consistency is the biggest drawback to more manual efforts.

## Hard to use

Many companies have been early adopters of text analytics, with varying results. With the new technology and tools available, why are some companies finding it hard to glean

## Figure 2: Gap Analysis Steps



Curate set of verbatims you are looking to get insights from → Select TA/NLP tool that allows you to group concepts and perform sentiment analysis → Load verbatims along with as many contextual variables that could be useful for gap analysis

Create key word groupings that align with your company's business strategy and customer experience goals → Process the data to assign sentiment scores to these key word groupings → Based on business questions, filter the data and compare across the contextual variables

Identify the biggest gaps in the sentiment or concept counts between the multiple sets of data → Based on identifying the key groupings with the biggest gaps, look at the verbatims tied to the groupings → Use the verbatims to show why the gap exists between the datasets

insights that improve the customer experience and lead to competitive advantages? Just as with any product, it's only going to be as good as the individual or individuals using the tool and setting it up. Many companies are dipping their toes into the world of text analytics and handing the responsibility to interns or junior analysts with little business experience. This is a major problem! Getting actionable insights from text analytics is most successful when you enlist a data scientist who understands your business and has the abilities to creatively mine for insights.

Avoid starting out with overly complex groupings that have too many categories. Having too many key groupings will make it difficult to see the gaps in the data due to needing a decent amount of mentions in each grouping. If you spread the mentions out among too many groupings, it becomes hard to see where to dig for the true insights.

None of the work you or your team do will be valuable and used by the business unless the company culture is focused on using data to produce facts instead of relying on gut feeling. Many times the insights that come out of text analytics will uncover new ways to operate or internal changes that are needed to really listen to the voice of the customer. Unless the company is flexible and focused on implementing what the data says, the net output of the text analytics work will be seen as mere ideas instead of actionable insights.

Another very important point is that any text analytics exercise should be in service of a business question or to support key initiatives. Many times

the tendency from a business stakeholder can be to say something to the effect of "Just look at the comments and see what insights you can find." This type of request will cause frustration to both the data scientist as well as the stakeholder seeking insights. An example of a better question from a business stakeholder could be: "We've had a recent decline in business in the southwest region. Can you tell me if customers there have more negative sentiment in regards to our business or if they are mentioning anything that's leading to the decline?" Direct questions lead to much more useful and relevant insights for the business. Many times the data practitioner must put the actual question being asked into more actionable terms in order to dig for insights.

### A competitive advantage

With the proliferation of data – much of it unstructured – companies that get their arms around text analytics now will have a competitive advantage. To truly listen to the voice of your customer, you need to leverage the things current customers, potential clients or employees are saying about your company. To discover insights and drive change, keep building a culture within your organization of being progressive when it comes to the new data-science techniques and mining the mountains of data. ⓠ

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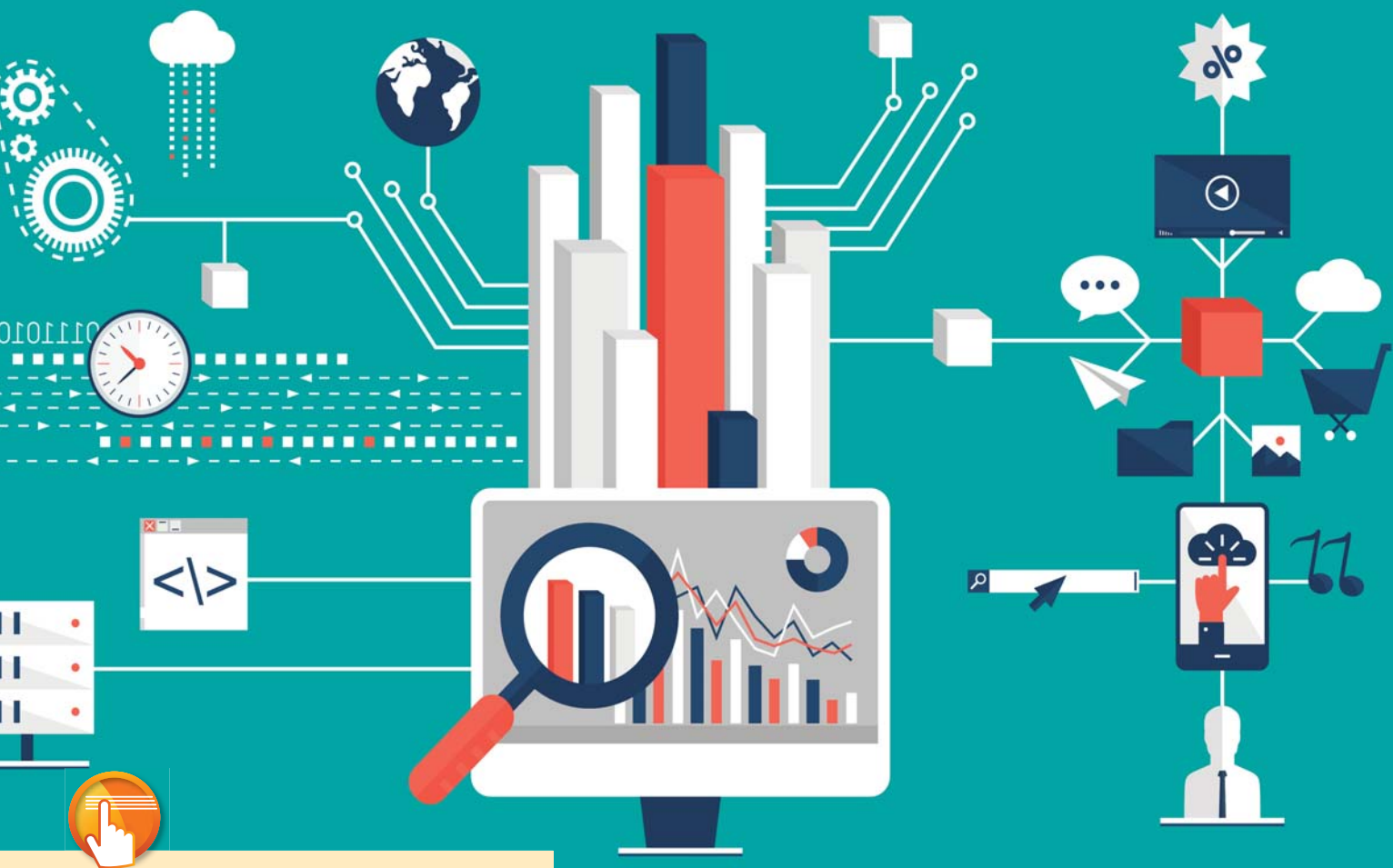
●●● text analytics

# Patterns and relationships

## A look at predictive and descriptive text analytics

| By Steven Struhl

### snapshot

In part one of a two-part series, Steven Struhl examines two aspects of text analytics.

Text analytics is a vast field reaching into many areas. These range from understanding how words are connected to training computers to grasp meanings. This discussion will talk about two broad subfields:

**Predictive or model-based analytics.** In this, text becomes a set of predictor variables used in a model. Models must have a target variable such as, for instance, overall ratings, clicks on a Web page, use levels or purchases. This form of analysis is quantitative. This is the focus of this month's article.

**Descriptive or enumerative analytics.** These appear to be the most common types of text analytics. These look for frequencies of word groups, associations of words, proximities of words and so on. Some of these lead to various pictorial representations of patterns in words, including the word cloud or wordle, which in popular usage seems to stand for all of text analytics. We will meet up with the descriptive methods next month, in the second part of this article.

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We will be skipping over a number of subfields, salient among them is sentiment analysis, which seeks to give an overall measure of the emotional tone of many comments. Positive and negative words and phrases are counted and a sentiment score is derived.

Sentiment analysis can involve fiendishly difficult tasks for the computer but when the results get to the user, they are largely a counting of which words and phrases appear. This often gets done through the computer searching dictionaries of positive and negative words and counting words appearing in each. More complex approaches untangle subtle patterns using complex algorithms.

We also will be skipping the vast arena of semantic analysis, which looks for complex relationships among words and phrases. Problems here are truly baffling to computers. As machines, they lack the innate ability to understand indirect phrasing, misused words, poor sentence structure, dangling modifiers and sarcasm. These of course are all hallmarks of human speech but typically give the computer fits. This area is still in its early days and is evolving. Discussions can go deep and sound a lot like philosophy and indeed reach into philosophical realms. Those of you expecting a bracing explanation of ontologies are likely to be disappointed.

## Patterns and relationships

In any text analysis exercise, we begin with a document, which is simply any collection of words. A document can be as short as a phrase and as long as or even longer than an encyclopedia. We also can analyze many hundreds or thousands of documents looking for patterns and relationships.

The computer must do extensive processing to this body of text to get its meanings. First, stop words (the, of, and, a, to and so on) must be removed. The frequency of these words is so large that they can swamp the analysis. They hold sentences together but the other words in fact convey the meanings.

Next, words must be made regular. There are many steps in doing this. First, spelling errors need to be corrected using a dictionary. Plurals must be singularized. Then we must do what is sometimes called stemming. Tenses need to be made uniform so that the same word does not



Figure 1
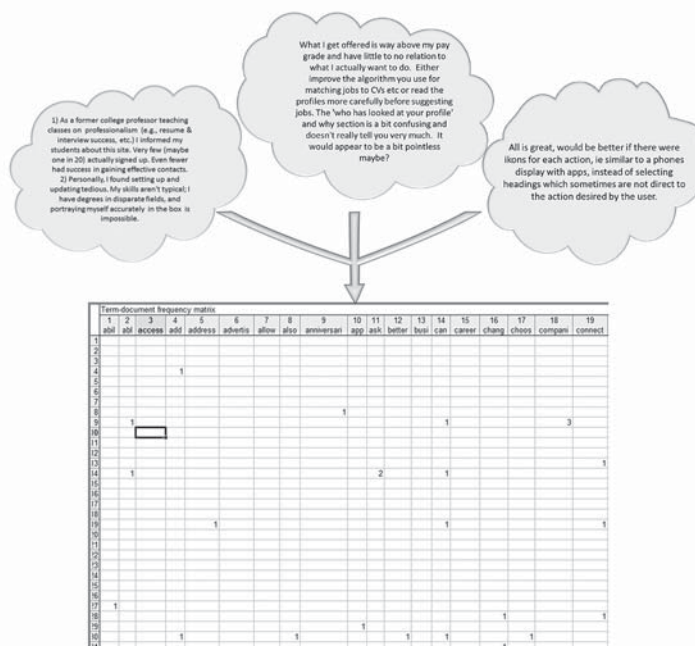
get diluted over minor variations.

Some programs go further to lemmatization. This is trying to identify the part of speech, so we know whether, say, "wax" is being used as a noun or a verb.

Other programs also attempt to resolve idioms. Some look for word pairs that have meanings, such as "not good" or "not bad." Groups of words that have meanings may be flagged, such as "Iron Mountain Brews" as the name of a place, not three separate items. This last activity is called finding named entities.

Sometimes this whole process is called tokenization. These tokens are what the computer processes. The computer can store these tokens in a variety of ways. One commonly-used method is called the word-vector model. This leads to something like a mostly blank spreadsheet. In this, each word that appeared in any document is a column and each document is a row. Each cell holds a count of how often each word appear in each document.

Figure 1 summarizes this process, where we have three documents (the cloud-like shapes) and the spreadsheet set up to hold their encoded contents. Recall that we have removed the stop words, so what is left are the words that bear meaning. Rules often get applied to limit the count of words (the columns). For instance, words that appear in the spreadsheet may be restricted to words that appear in more than 1 percent of the documents. Doing this, you may have somewhere between 300 and 600 words as columns.

Another method of corralling text is called the sequential model. This involves a search for words occurring near each other in the document. This differs from the word-vector model, in which syntax is irrelevant. (That is, the word-vector model simply counts whether words have occurred in a given document and how often, ignoring grammar and syntax.)

An often-used method is searching is called n-grams. This uses what is called a sliding window, which is like a box that is a set number of words (five, six, seven, etc., words in length) that moves through the document.

Figure 2 shows a sliding window of seven words' length taking two steps through text which has been cleaned of stop words and regularized in tenses and word endings.

The sliding window at each step has been outlined with different borders and slightly offset so that its progress through the text can be seen more clearly. This process produces a table showing how often words occur together in the sliding window as it moves through the document. More technically, this table is called a similarities matrix.

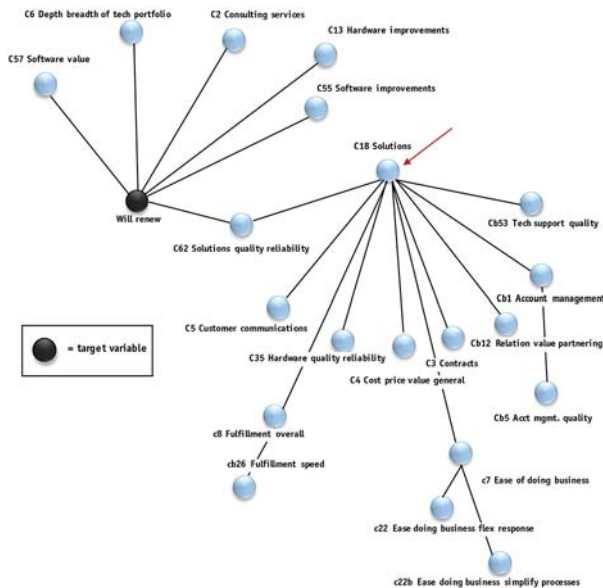Once we have done all this processing, we then can begin.

## One more ingredient

For a predictive analysis, we need one more ingredient than processed words: a target or dependent variable. This typically is a data item that gets collected outside the words themselves. It could be something near the text, like an

Figure 2



former college professor teach class professional resume interview success inform
student site few actual sign fewer success gain effective contact personal find set
update tedious skill aren't typical degree disparate field portray accurate box
impossible

Figure 3



C6 Depth breadth of tech portfolio  C2 Consulting services
C57 Software value  C13 Hardware improvements
C55 Software improvements
C18 Solutions
Will renew
Cb53 Tech support quality
C62 Solutions quality reliability
Cb1 Account management
C5 Customer communications  Cb12 Relation value partnering
C35 Hardware quality reliability
C3 Contracts
C4 Cost price value general
Cb5 Acct mgmt. quality
c8 Fulfillment overall
cb26 Fulfillment speed
c7 Ease of doing business
c22 Ease doing business flex response
c22b Ease doing business simplify processes

● = target variable

online rating that accompanies commentary. It also could be linked to the comment by matching files, for instance, as when purchasing data that gets linked to the text comment. It also could be an overall rating collected in a survey that can get linked to text commentary.

Analysis could be based on individual words or phrases but can gain considerable power after the data has been coded, just as we would do for any questionnaire. Coding allows phrases to be processed as single units. Some very smart programs can do much of the coding now. (We are not recommending software but, as an example, the SPSS Text Analytics program did remarkably well, producing a highly detailed coding scheme.) Indeed, this machine-aided categorization of comments also would fall under the heading of text analytics.

For this article, we will be showing how text can predict intent to continue a service, using the relatively new and highly powerful method called Bayesian networks or Bayes nets. (My book *Practical Text Analytics* has other predictive models using classification trees or CHAID and regression.)

Bayes nets both can focus in on the variables that are most important

and create a model showing how those variables fit together. This method puts these variables into a network, where all the variables are connected and any change in one variable takes into account all the other variables.

If you are at least passingly familiar with structural equation models (SEM models) or PLS path models, these Bayes nets models will look similar – variables and connectors. However, Bayes nets can be truly data-driven – that is, entirely or largely be self-constructed, with the data creating the patterns of connections. You can find a more in depth discussion of Bayesian networks in another article.[1]

This example comes from a large online community of professionals, such as engineers, who use a software and computer services company. Their verbatim comments have been gathered into 79 codes (each code gathering similar comments) and these will serve as the predictors or independent variables. These engineers were also asked if they intended to renew with this provider. Whether or not they intend to renew ("will renew") is the dependent or target variable.

The first step is isolating variables that have the most influence. This set is called the Markov blanket. These are all

the variables that fall closest to the target variable. (In a network, variables that are closest together have the most influence on each other.) Exactly how Markov and his blanket come into this is a long discussion that we will save for another time. What we need to know now is that the Markov blanket comes from a search for strong connections—sifting through the variables many times.

We have gone down to 18 variables. Figure 3 shows the best Bayes net. Using these we grew the network again, allowing it to find the optimal configuration. This network explained or predicted patterns in the target variable best after a stringent type of testing called cross-validation.

This data-driven, automatic layout looks very sensible. For instance, the variable solutions (pointed out with the red arrow) leads to several specific variables, such as "customer communications," "fulfillment overall," "hardware quality and reliability," "cost price value, general," and so on – all of which seem like very logical parts of this broader variable. "Solutions" also has a direct connection to "solutions quality and reliability," which in turn connects to the target.

Other variables linked directly to the target include software value, depth/breadth of technology, consulting services, hardware improvements and software improvements. Again, variables that link directly generally have the strongest influence on each other.

The network performed remarkably well in predicting intent to renew. Figure 4 shows how this fell out, in a correct classification table. We see from this which people the model would predict as renewing or not, based solely on their comments.

Overall, the model correctly predicted intent to renew with 68.1 percent accuracy. The two extremes, and "yes" in particular, are predicted with very well ("yes" is 82.8 percent correct). Only those saying "maybe" to renewal did not get captured well. The majority of them look like those who say they will renew (66.4 percent misidentified as saying "yes" based on their comments).

However, maybe the model is picking up something about those sitting on the fence and perhaps most them ultimately would say "yes." Their commentary at least suggests that this is so.

The Bayes net also calculates how much influence each variable has.

## Figure 4

|  |  | Actual response | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  | No | Maybe | Yes |
|  |  | (n = 5142) | (n =2902) | (n =9651) |
| Predicted response | No | 70.5% | 20.8% | 4.4% |
|  | Maybe | 6.8% | 12.9% | 12.8% |
|  | Yes | 22.7% | 66.4% | 82.8% |

## Figure 5

| | |
|---|---|
| c16 Solutions | 359.5 |
| cb62 Solns Quality Reliability | 299.3 |
| cb31 Hardware Improvements | 206.4 |
| cb55 Software Improvements | 152.7 |
| c3 Contracts | 128.6 |
| cb53 Svc Tech Support Quality | 116.1 |
| c1 Account Mgmt | 104.7 |
| c7 Ease of Doing Business | 99.1 |
| cb5 Act Mgmt Quality | 85.6 |
| c6 Depth Breadth of Technology Portfolio | 85.1 |
| cb26 Fulfillment Speed | 67.8 |
| cb24 Ease Busines Simplify Processes | 61.1 |
| c5 Customer Communications | 58.8 |
| c2 Consulting Services | 54.0 |
| c8 Fulfillment | 52.8 |
| cb22 Ease Busines Flex Responsive | 35.1 |
| cb48 Relation Value Partnering | 29.2 |
| c4 Cost/Price/Value General | 2.4 |
| cb3 Act Mgmt Local | 0.9 |
| cb1 Act Mgmt Comm | 0.8 |

Figure 5 displays the effects.

The chart has been indexed, so that the average of all the comments is set to 100. Note that "solutions," which was the linchpin of many other important variables, emerged as having the strongest effect on the dependent.

This means that if the client can make changes in "solutions," this will have the most effect on changing intent to renew. However, we can see from the diagram that "solutions" is a variable with many parts. For solutions to change, its closely-connected variables will have to change as well.

"Solutions reliability and quality" is the single most specific area with the strongest effect. Following this are hardware and software improvements. Another more detailed chart (which is not shown) reveals that these have a negative direction – the more mentions, the less likely a person is to say she/he will renew.

We can see here that text commentary, encoded and in connection with an overall rating, can lead to a strong predictive model. We can learn about which variables are important, get an accurate prediction and understand the strengths and relationships of the predictor variables. Those are all the needed ingredients of an excellent model.

## Explain patterns

Predictive approaches seek to find the words or combinations of words that forecast or explain patterns in a dependent variable, like share of spending or overall rating. To get these powerful methods to work, you must have information other than the text itself. That is, you must know something else about those who made the comments, whether it is a rating, an intention or a behavior. Predictive text analytics can serve as a guide to action and can have surprisingly strong power. It has worked especially well with text that has been encoded to find underlying ideas or themes.

For all the usefulness of the predictive approaches, they are relatively less used than more descriptive methods. These latter methods show broad patterns and relationships among words. They also are highly pictorial, which may explain some of their appeal. We will discuss these methods, and more about how they contrast with the predictive methods, in next month's article. ⓞ

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1 The Bayes nets article appeared in two parts in *Quirk's*.

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# Fast-casual MR

Leveraging online qualitative for fast delivery of insights

| By Isaac Rogers
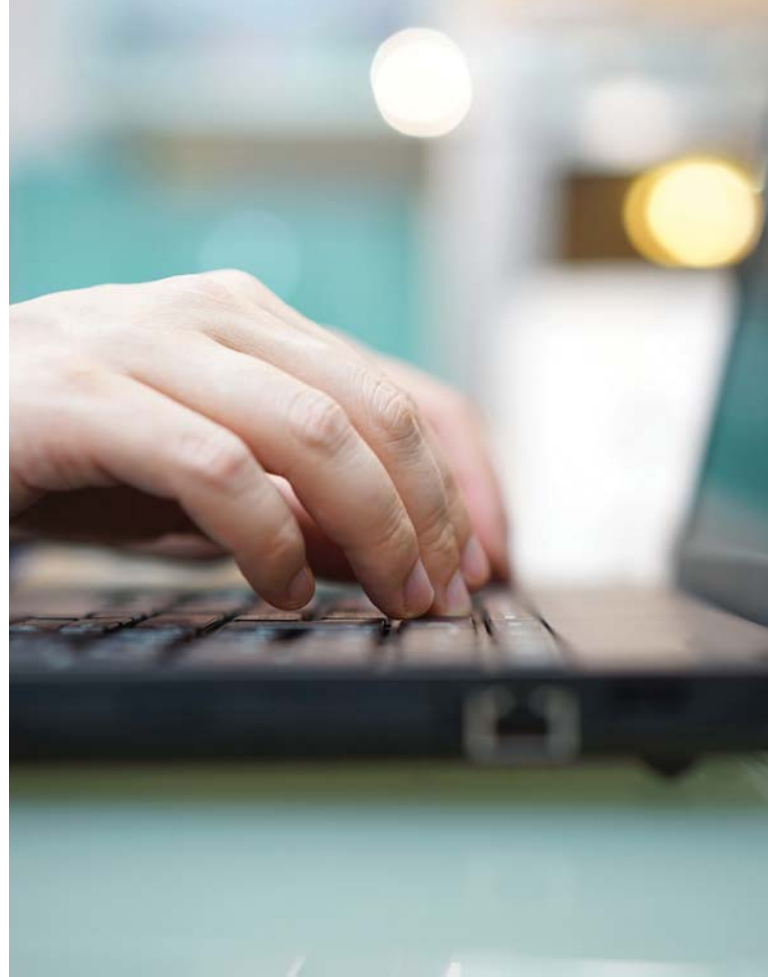
### snapshot

How digital tools can help researchers keep pace with end-client demands for timely, usable insights.

Close your eyes for a minute and picture your favorite restaurant – your absolute top pick of all the places you've ever eaten. You may be picturing a lavish steakhouse, a sushi bar or perhaps a quiet Italian place in your neighborhood. In most cases, I bet you pictured a full-service, fine-dining experience. The food is wonderful, the atmosphere perfect and while it's not the cheapest option, in your mind it's worth it.

Keep the picture of that restaurant in your mind but ask yourself: If this is my favorite restaurant in the entire world, why don't I eat every meal there? The answer of course is that it's just not practical because of cost, time or convenience reasons. I mean, it's the best and, while it's what you would really love to visit most of the time, that is just not realistic.

In many ways, the gold-standard qualitative research project is very much like that fine-dining restaurant in the minds of researchers and clients. If we have enough time and budget, we seek out a picture-perfect project that we know will give us the rich insights we are hungry for. We know it'll cost us a pretty penny and we know it's not the fastest meal in town but sometimes it's what we really need.

Because of the logistics and field times of traditional face-to-face qualitative, historically this was the most common option available to our clients. Fielding a qualitative study had certain cost and time parameters that we always had to deal with, so we had more luxury when it came to cost and time pressures. There simply wasn't a way to get around the travel and in-person requirements that came with face-to-face qualitative – conducting a study always required a certain amount of time and budget to field. This is why many face-to-face projects have similar size and scopes: practically, there are only so many people you can fit around a focus group table and maintain a lively conversation; there is only so long you can keep those respondents in the room; and there are only so many groups a moderator can host in a single day before reach-

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ing a point of exhaustion.

As researchers, because we spent so much of our history in face-to-face qualitative research with a defined tool set and rigid constraints, we have honed our craft around these real-world boundaries. We mastered the process of focus groups and individual interviews. We standardized our processes to make them repeatable, reliable and consistent in quality. In many ways, we became really, really good at what we did – just like your favorite fine-dining restaurant has mastered delivering the experience that keeps customers coming back for more.

But herein lies a dilemma: We are so good at designing and executing traditional research that when customers with new desires and evolving taste buds began knocking on our door, we weren't fully prepared to evolve our menu of options.

## Has radically changed

The truth is we no longer live in the same one-size-fits-all world, and by "we" I mean brands and marketers, researchers and even respondents. The very nature of consumer behavior has radically changed over the last 15 years, as technology has transformed everything from shopping behavior to what we consider acceptable ways to interact and communicate with others.

Yet, in many ways, the research industry is still serving up a product that was carefully refined to deliver insights in a world that existed before the Internet, iPhone or Facebook. Even in our still-early days of digital qualitative methods, we're largely using project designs that were created for the face-to-face world and we've simply adapted them for use in digital platforms. We remodeled the restaurant and added a few menu items but we're still delivering an experience to our customers based on the fine-dining format that we've delivered for years in more traditional venues. And it is because we made only minor adaptations to our methods when we migrated to digital that we hear so many end-clients and marketers protest that online qualitative research is in many cases nearly as costly and time-consuming as more traditional methods.

So how do we shift our thinking and processes to accommodate changing client expectations? Close your eyes and picture a different situation. Imagine yourself at the office on a Tuesday morning at 11:15, energy low because you skipped breakfast and you're the main speaker at an executive presentation at 1 p.m. You grab your coat and head to the door – you need something you can consume quickly and that you know will hit the spot and has healthy ingredients. Do you head toward your favorite restaurant from before? Probably not. There's a good chance you're destined for something like Chipotle, Panera or Five Guys. These sorts of fast-casual restaurants are just the right blend of streamlined process, quality ingredients and made-to-order customization. They are the "right meal, right now" when price, convenience and quality are all in careful balance.

With today's digital qualitative tools and methods, researchers are realizing they too can design entirely new insight experiences for their clients, experiences that deliver on the needs of today's corporate researcher who doesn't always have the time for a full-service, sit-down dining experience and instead needs a good meal that satisfies their needs on-time and on-budget.

And this is the great untapped potential of digital qualitative; we no longer need to design projects around the traditional expectations of the past. The incredible innovation we've seen in online qualitative platforms over the last 10 years provides researchers an array of options in how we engage respondents, the kinds of information and experiences they can share with us and even the effort and cost required to tap into these consumer insights.

Below are examples of the ways innovative qualitative researchers are adapting their approaches to better fit the digital world of today, delivering new and customer-centric research designs that eschew the standards of yesterday and instead focus on what the client really needs in that particular instance.

## Not 'quality research'

An unfortunately common misconception is that researchers perceive any project that fields quickly and focuses on a short set of research objectives as not being "quality research." They will often pick apart a quick-turn project like an acclaimed chef critiquing the quality of ingredients served up from a roadside hamburger joint. They will argue that there isn't enough "meat" in the discussion guide or that you simply didn't gather enough respondent attitudinal data to perform a proper screening. They'll argue that if you don't follow all the right steps you are falling short of what you could accomplish in a perfect qual project.

Unfortunately, these researchers are missing the point entirely.

The truth is, in today's world, not all projects are created equal. There are times when a fully robust, rigorously designed qualitative project is exactly what the client needs but there are also countless occasions when the client has a certain number of days and a certain budget and simply needs the best insights that can be gathered within these constraints.

A research agency client came to us some months ago with a challenge, asking us to help "right-size" their approach by creating a custom insights menu for their client. In this case, their client was a major cookware firm that was facing increased pressure on its product lines and was looking to rapidly evolve product marketing; the client felt it had "forgotten" what its customers really wanted and the various ways its products were used in kitchens across the country. It was set to embark on an entirely new brand position for its product lines and had only a few short months to understand its consumers and reshape the entire marketing portfolio in order to stay competitive.

However, the research agency did not fully account for these needs when it presented its first proposal to the client. The agency initially suggested a traditional approach to the problem, with corresponding fieldwork recommendations, timelines and costs; each phase of research would take six to eight weeks

to complete and another two to three weeks for analysis. The proposed rigorous screening criteria meant skyrocketing fieldwork costs and lengthier recruiting timelines. The client refused the first recommendation and stated that the agency needed to come back with a design that allowed brand managers to dip in and out of in-home digital ethnographies with various target audiences in a two-week timespan.

We worked with the agency to reboot the design process; in a couple of days we threw out all the nice-to-have screening questions, streamlined the fieldwork process and leveraged automated video transcription technology to speed the analysis process. The agency presented a retooled menu of options to the client that delivered just the right insights in the right amount of time with the right budget.

If the agency had been allowed to conduct a traditionally-scoped project, could this project have generated a larger number of insights or probed deeper into the unmet needs of the consumers? Perhaps. But frankly, it's irrelevant, since those potentially marginally better-quality results would have been delivered too late and at too high a cost. The insights would have never mattered because the company did not have the luxury of time; it needed the insights it could access quickly and efficiently in order to make agile marketing decisions.

## Lengthy process

When an agency partners with an end client to conduct a qualitative project today, there is a somewhat lengthy process just to get the project off the ground. Conference calls are held to establish scope and timelines. Separate e-mails and documents are circulated for days after to discuss and negotiate budget. A small committee forms to review a draft discussion guide. Four or five rounds of edits occur just to get the screener finalized. These expensive start-up costs take days or weeks (or in some cases months) and implicitly add significant costs to the research process itself.

Now, a growing number of researchers are finding that these inherent inefficiencies in the project-based approach can be avoided for some of their clients. By leveraging a concept we call always-on research, the agency moves away from thinking strictly of independent projects and instead designs a more continuous insights process.

In one example, a research firm designed a long-term qualitative insight panel for a major office supply chain. Rather than splitting up the annual research calendar into five-to-seven independent, heavily-nuanced projects, they worked together to recruit 100 office supply purchasers who broadly fit the chain's overall target customer base. We manage this qualitative insight panel as a segregated, always-on group of respondents. The agency works with the client to develop a continuous stream of research needs. One week, for example, we might dip into the panel to invite 15 customers to Webcam interviews where they will review new product concepts and

provide interactive feedback. Two weeks later, we may invite 50 of the respondents to complete a diary exercise where they document all of their office supply purchases via smartphone and discuss their purchasing needs in an online group discussion. The following month, the researcher could invite the entire audience to complete an online survey that captures their opinions on Web-based vs brick-and-mortar retailer products.

This structure is not a typical "project" but instead a continuous design focused on what was really important to the end client. In this case, they needed an extremely nimble way to tap into the insights of their target customers over the course of 12 months. They wanted nearly instantaneous access to their feedback and sought to avoid the expensive start-up process of independent projects. By rethinking the entire research process and building around what was possible with digital research tools, we delivered an always-on approach that fit the client's insight needs.

## Leveraging operational efficiencies

The genius of many fast-casual restaurants is that they give the consumer a reasonable amount of customization over their meal while leveraging operational efficiencies by limiting the overall scope of the menu. This allows them to prepare a meal customized to each patron but only use a handful of ingredients and cooking methods.

Many of our clients are taking this same "productized" approach to their research portfolio. They develop a repeatable, digitally-driven approach to common research needs – think concept testing, habits and practice feedback or shop-alongs – and rather than treat each project as entirely customized, they offer their clients a preset version that delivers insights faster and more easily than the traditional fully-tailored approach.

One of the agencies we work with has achieved success by productizing their day-in-the-life ethnographic method. They give their clients a defined set of parameters for what is

possible with this boxed solution – a fixed amount of screening criteria, one to two observational objectives and 10 respondents. That's it. If the client has needs outside of the scope of the product, it becomes a custom proposal. They have a standard blueprint for the process that allows them to go from client kickoff discussion to analysis in 10 business days, while reducing the overall cost of the research as compared to a similar custom project.

These kinds of productized approaches are becoming increasingly popular. As we are finding the best-use cases for digital qualitative tools in insight gathering, researchers are finding that they can create solutions that cater to their specific skill sets and talents, lower execution costs and reduce the amount of back-and-forth common in traditional proposals.

For the end client, these productized solutions provide the ability to tackle research needs in bite-sized chunks; smaller, more budget-friendly options mean conducting two to three smaller projects within the same time frame and budget as a single, traditional custom research project. We are seeing more and more end clients move away from long projects with multiple objectives and instead leaning toward smaller, leaner, more focused research "sprints." This allows them to get in and out of the research process rapidly in order to answer critical business questions quickly.

## Panic attack

There are still many in our industry who equate fast with low-quality research and shallow insights and the mere mention of a quick-turn request gives them a panic attack. What these researchers fail to realize is that technology is now deeply embedded into nearly all parts of the research fieldwork, data collection and insight-gathering process and that these technologies have the capability to change the concept of what goes into a "typical research project." Today's technology gives innovative marketers and researchers new ways to engage their customers, faster methods to gather feedback and more

efficient methods to analyze results.

Just because the approach puts speed of delivery above other aspects of the design doesn't mean it's a poor-quality project. In fact, I believe that mentality is holding our industry back. There an increasing number of occasions when clients would rather have access to good insights on-time, rather than perfect insights too late. By recognizing that we must adapt our research designs to accommodate for more than just a single type of experience, we offer our clients a wider array of solutions to their problems.

We must to remind ourselves that nobody needs market research. People need the insights that the market research can deliver. If some of those insights are needed faster than traditional research methods can deliver, it's our responsibility to find new ways to deliver the highest-quality insights we can on timelines that work within the business cycle of our clients.

## Quiet revolution

Qualitative research is in the midst of a quiet revolution and one that I believe will allow our industry to flourish and expand into entirely new markets. By embracing digital tools, taking advantage of process automation and leveraging reporting analytics, we have the opportunity to deliver valuable, business-changing qualitative insights to our current client base of enterprise corporate researchers and marketers while also expanding our reach into mid-sized firms and into departments such as operations, R&D and human resources that typically don't have the budgets and timelines that allow for qualitative research.

We might be stealing a page from the playbook of the fast-casual restaurants popping up on almost every street corner by becoming more streamlined and right-sized to fit our varying customers' needs but I believe this revolution will allow us to serve more customers in more ways than we ever thought possible. ⓞ

Isaac Rogers is CEO of the technology division of 20|20 Research, Nashville. He can be reached at isaac. rogers@2020research.com.

# Not so fast

## Is Cuba a new business opportunity or a mirage?

| By Tim Grainey

**snapshot**

Tim Grainey assesses the landscape for marketing and marketing research in Cuba.

For over 50 years, Cuba has effectively been closed to American businesses due to the U.S. government's longstanding embargo. Relations between the two nations are thawing, opening connections for business, cultural and non-governmental organizations (NGO) activities. A key decision facing American businesses is whether Cuba is a new El Dorado or if it is an illusion and they should focus on other markets. Marketing research agencies can assist their clients with market-entry investigations and subsequent market-launch activities.

When companies are deciding whether to expand into a country, they typically conduct market-entry research, which identifies: competitors in the market; current brand imagery; infrastructure needs to support their products/services; distribution and sales channels; realistic product/services price points; financial projections (including prospective currency exchange rates); cultural (local market) considerations; and legal considerations.

One automotive company has asked our firm, Strategic Research Initiatives, for guidance in entering the market. Cuba is unique on the transportation side, with 1940s and 1950s restored American models – including Studebakers, old Russian-made Ladas and Moskvitchs as well as new-model Kias from Korea and Geelys from China. China is a primary supplier of newer buses, cars and trucks. One particular concern for domestic-based automotive companies is residual versus current brand imagery since many Cubans' impressions of Buick, Chevrolet, Chrysler and other makes are based off of vehicles from the 1950s; brand impressions based off of current models may differ drastically. Currently, sales of new automobiles are through the Cuban government (fleet sales) for official use and rental car fleets. In the past, automotive companies learned from the experiences in China: The first companies that enter and stay through initial financial hardships are often rewarded in the long-term with a stronger market share, brand awareness and imagery among customers.

Cuba is definitely of interest to some specific business sectors:

• hotels, airlines, convention planners and other companies in the tourism sector;

quirks.com/articles/2017/20170110.aspx

- construction and power-generation firms;
- parts suppliers for automotive and industrial equipment;
- small consumer products (soap, disposable razors, etc.);
- computer and telecommunications products and infrastructure;
- agricultural supplies and equipment;
- freight expeditors;
- automotive (trucks, buses and rental cars).

In addition, some American companies are interested in importing Cuban products including: cigars (Cohiba, Partagas), rum (Havana Club, Santiago), beer (Cristal, Bucanero), historical American cars and agricultural products.

Eight U.S. based airlines – Alaska Airlines, American Airlines, Delta Air Lines, Jet Blue Airways, Frontier Airlines, Southwest Airlines, Spirit Airlines and United Airlines – have been approved by the U.S. Department of Transportation to service 10 international airports in Cuba; some flights began in the fall of 2016. Direct service will be available in cities such as Chicago, Ft. Lauderdale, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis and Philadelphia to start.

For Americans visiting Cuba, they must meet one of the following 12 "people-to-people" categories established by the U.S. Department of Treasury:
1. Family visits
2. Official business of the U.S. government, foreign governments and certain intergovernmental organizations
3. Journalistic activity
4. Professional research and professional meetings
5. Educational activities
6. Religious activities
7. Public performances, clinics, workshops, athletic and other competitions and exhibitions
8. Support for the Cuban people
9. Humanitarian projects
10. Activities of private foundations or research or educational institutes
11. Exportation, importation, or transmission of information or information materials
12. Certain authorized export transactions

Marketing research is allowed under category four and our firm has already started to collect research data in Cuba. For business professionals, traveling to Cuba with an authorized group on a people-to-people exchange will allow them to understand some of the opportunities and challenges.

## Sobering facts

Cuba is popular right now as a new market for Americans, particularly after President Obama's historic 2016 visit and the 2015 opening of the American embassy in Havana but there are some sobering facts to consider before expanding into the market:

- Currently, all Cubans are guaranteed a job by the government, with an annual salary of approximately $25 a month. Doctors and other professionals can make up to $60 a month and people supplement their base pay with tips in tourism jobs, second and third jobs, as well as remittances from relatives in the States. Still, for many ordinary consumer goods, the socialistic economic model needs to change drastically in order for most people to afford even inexpensive consumer goods.
- The size of the market is also a potential downside. Cuba has approximately 11 million residents, which is roughly the population of the state of Ohio.
- The Cuban government typically partners with most new companies entering the market, taking an ownership stake in the venture. The socialistic system is all-pervasive in Cuba. Payment for services by the government is typically over two-to-three years, rather than months, which is a financial model that may not be palatable to some clients.
- U.S. government restrictions: a full repeal of the embargo is not expected to happen quickly, as some major issues have to be negotiated. Issues requiring negotiation including claims from Cuban-Americans who lost land or businesses after the Cuban revolution, revising trade agreements and the Cuban government's demand for the return of the land that the Guantanamo Bay Naval Base resides on.
- A bleak 2017 is projected in Cuba as Venezuela's economic meltdown has had a huge impact on Cuba's finances. Venezuela was a large supplier of discounted oil to Cuba under the decade-plus rule of former President Hugo Chavez. Cubans were encouraged to cut back on their power usage during the summer months of 2016.

## See rapid expansion

Advertising is in its infancy on the island but the potential is huge. The advertising field is expected to see rapid expansion in a nation where advertising has been barely existent, with many media outlets under government control. In the future, commercial

advertising is expected to become an important part of the mass media in Cuba, which will assist the growth of local and international brands as well as increase competition in the marketplace.

Strategic Research Initiatives has partnered with Morvin Isidora of International Fieldworld Inc. of Miami to conduct fieldwork in Cuba. International Fieldworld has been working in Central America and the Caribbean Basin for decades. We recently conducted a brand awareness research project in the market. Previous research has shown that, even in the absence of media advertising and low purchasing power, Cubans are brand-focused and over four-in-10 made their purchase decision based on the impact and influence of the brand. Among recent research on global brands, three American brands rated among the top 10: Coca-Cola, Nike and Apple.

Once a company has conducted market-entry research and decided that it makes sense to enter Cuba, then it needs to develop an operational plan including: creating a timeline for launch in the market; identifying and vetting distributors; establishing sales outlets and a management structure; setting prices; developing promotion and advertising strategies; finalizing legal contracts, licenses, etc., in both countries, and hiring local staff/suppliers.

## Several years away

Internet surveys are still several years away because of low Internet penetration in homes and the cost for Wi-Fi access. Cuba is currently one of the least-connected countries in the hemisphere. The International Telecommunications Union estimates that about 30 percent of Cubans now have at least semi-regular access to the Internet at home or work. While this number is low, it is still nearly double the percentage from five years ago. The Cuban government newspaper, *Granma*, announced in a recent editorial: "Cuba has been, and is, intent upon being connected to the world, despite propaganda to the contrary. The government wants to have Internet access for all citizens by 2020." Currently, information flows through the transfer of material from hand-to-hand via flash drives, DVDs or through Cuban chat sites.

A concern of researchers abroad is the extent of scrutiny from government officials on the survey process. As in China, we suggest working actively with government officials, even though there is not a specific law that marketing research agencies must do so. In Cuba, involvement from government agencies includes not just national administrators but also local neighborhood-level officials from the Committee for the Defense of the Revolution (CDR). The local authorities provide authorization for interviewers and reassure residents that the survey is legitimate to complete. Market research is not common on the island and some people are nervous about providing honest answers. Utilizing local interviewers and supervisors trained by experienced researchers will also assist the credentialing process with respondents. Researchers should avoid questions about religion and local politics.

Face-to-face interviewing is the methodology of choice, common in many markets outside of the U.S., but with a wrinkle, focused on neighborhood rather than household sampling, with assistance from local CDR officials. In addition, conducting face-to-face interviews through sampling at the neighborhood/block level ensures that samples include all different groups of people, including Millennials – who were born after the Cuban Revolution and are more open to foreign influences. Interviews are commonly conducted in public squares or in the street, rather than in residences, some of which are set within multi-story units behind stores and difficult to enter. In some cases, four generations of a family will live together, which can further complicate sampling schemes.

Tablet/PDAs should be used on a limited basis at first in Cuba, as the new technology can create distrust or suspicion, particularly among older respondents. Tablets/PDAs are appropriate for longer surveys (15-20 minutes). For shorter surveys, pen-and-paper surveys are recommended. Data entry should be done locally, with the data sent out of the country by memory sticks/drives, as package delivery between the United States and Cuba is still limited and costly.

## Analyzed carefully

Cuba is a fascinating country and a prime new market for some American companies but it must be analyzed carefully and from a longer-term perspective. Currently, Cuba is not a viable consumer market for many products; it simply does not exist at the present time, nor will it until Cuba's economic model changes drastically. ⓠ

Tim Grainey is the founder and managing member of Strategic Research Initiatives, Queen Creek, Ariz. He can be reached at srigrainey@cox.net.

••• special advertising section

# 24 TOP SHOPPER INSIGHTS COMPANIES

If your company's focus is on the retail industry, you know the most important element to focus your efforts on is understanding the consumer! Retail is a large segment within the market research industry, and when you are looking to connect with potential customers, it is important to have a solid understanding of the various segments, everything from age and income to location and gender.

Shopper insights can provide you an up-close and personal look at how shoppers behave in-store, showing you how consumers shop, what they shop for, how much they spend and much more. When it comes to ways to gain insights, there are many methods to choose from, and the right shopper insights company can offer you the best option for your research project. Your shopper insights study can include more traditional methods like surveys and panels; newer, high-tech methods such as eye-tracking, virtual shopping and 3-D shopping simulations; or a combination of both. No matter what methods you turn to when looking to better understand consumers, the following companies can offer you the tools needed to gain valuable insights. Here is a list of 23 marketing research companies that offer shopper insight services.

## Ann Michaels & Associates, Ltd.

## Ann Michaels Ltd.

Founded 1998 | 11 employees
Kathy Doering, CEO

Customer experience management firm assisting clients with customer loyalty, consumer online sentiment analysis, competitive intelligence, brand awareness, customer satisfaction and customer experience measurement. Today's consumer has higher expectations, a larger reach and a louder voice. Keeping up with it all can be challenging, even for the most customer-centric company. That's where we come in. Our customer experience measurement programs allow us to listen, engage and monitor the customer experience across all channels.

**Phone 866-703-8238**
**www.annmichaelsltd.com**

who provides heads-up, on-your-toes and immediate feedback based on your multichannel experiences. For 30+ years, BestMark has partnered with the world's greatest companies to help them anticipate shifting and emerging trends to stay on top and ahead of the curve. Feedback and analysis is what we are known for. Some of our services include: mystery shopping; mobile surveys; competitive intelligence; auditing; customer feedback; and any other field service. Fast facts: 15+ million evaluations completed; 600,000+ field reps; mobile and Web surveying; 24/7 analytics and reporting.

**Phone 952-922-2205**
**www.bestmark.com**

## Brädo Creative Insight

Founded 1998 | 44 employees
Steve Nollau, President and Chief Strategy Officer
Bob Cuneo, President and Chief Creative Officer

Shopping happens fast. And shelves are crowded. There's no time for nuance. But that doesn't mean there is no time for insight. In fact, we believe shopper insight must be elevated to establish empathy and emotion in the scenarios of urgency and parity. Brand equity messages and reasons to buy are not enough. Insight, a fresh, deeper understanding of the shopper, must be achieved to transcend price. Differentiate from competition. And close sales. Brädo Creative Insight is a strategic market research agency specializing in qualitative shopper market research. We help clients achieve and leverage insight in shopper marketing and communications.

**Phone 314-621-9499**
**www.brado.net**

## BARE International

Founded 1987 | 352 employees
Dale Bare, CEO

BARE International sets the industry standard as the largest independent provider of customer experience research, data and analytics for companies worldwide. We provide customized research solutions for your unique business needs. Founded in 1987, BARE International is a family-owned business with global capabilities. With headquarters in the Washington, D.C., area and nine offices around the world, on a daily basis we are doing business for clients in more than 150 countries, completing more than 50,000 evaluations/audits each month. Our customer experience research services can help you see your business through your customers' eyes and impact your bottom line.

**Phone 703-593-8970**
**www.bareinternational.com**

## BestMark

Founded in 1986 | 200+ employees
Ann Jennings, CEO

Today's companies require precise, timely insights to respond to marketplace course corrections, anticipate unforeseen disruptions and stay on the cutting edge. This means you need a powerful, agile partner

# CANADIAN VIEWPOINT INC.

## Canadian Viewpoint Inc.

Founded 1980 | 50 employees
Carol Udell, CEO

**Real People, Real Solutions, Real Data.**
Canadian Viewpoint is Canada's leading expert in market research data collection.

Canadian Viewpoint is a multimode, quantitative field firm with 35+ years of experience in the marketing research industry. Our data collection field services include the use of our proprietary Canadian consumer (~300,000) and medical (~15,000) panels and we offer services ranging from on-site to online. We do face-to-face (intercept/mall, taste/pack test, exit interviews, etc.), CATI (in-house phone center), IHUTs and online fieldwork. We have helped clients evaluate employee performance and customer service quality with our on-site services and mystery shopping for 25+ years. At Canadian Viewpoint, we pride ourselves at providing innovative, efficient and quality data collection fieldwork services.

**Phone  905-770-1770**
**canview.com**

# Civicom®
## MARKETING RESEARCH SERVICES

## Civicom Marketing Research Services

Founded 2000 | 350 employees
Rebecca West, Global VP, Marketing Research Services

**unveiling!**
Civicom **ThoughtLight**
**A New Way To Gather Insights!**

Civicom ThoughtLight™ is a qualitative mobile app for collecting richer in-the-moment insights. Respondents can capture and send video, audio, photos and text responses for your assigned activities. The Civicom ThoughtLight™ app is a useful tool for shopper insights, audio diaries, patient journeys, on-the-spot data collection and helpful in any situation where a researcher wants to engage with participants to gather data and feedback through the use of participant smartphones. Civicom ThoughtLight™ includes GPS, geolocation and offline accessibility for locations without a data connection. It is compatible with iOS and Android and available on the App Store and through Google Play.

**Phone 203-413-2423**
**www.civicommrs.com**

# Confero

## Confero Inc.

Founded 1986 | 48 employees
Elaine Buxton, CEO

Confero is a leading provider of data-driven, actionable shopper insights research and consulting. Mobile and analytic reporting tools, along with a 200,000+ field force of mystery shoppers, help clients discover any aspect of the in-store or on-premise experience. Discover roadblocks at retail, CPG-retailer-shopper disconnects and those hard-to-identify shopper pain points along the path-to-purchase. Example projects include wayfinding studies, omnichannel "BOPIS" shopper experience competitor studies, point-of-purchase promotion checks in-store and brand presence at retail. Confero's award-winning project team has extensive experience working with manufacturers, CPG, retail, food service, beverage, grocery, travel, tourism and health care clients.

**Phone 800-326-3880**
**www.conferoinc.com**

## Creative Consumer Research

Founded 1976 | 76 employees
Patricia Pratt, CEO



For 40 years CCR's mission has been to provide clients accurate and actionable information to develop strategic solutions. This includes having an expertise in mystery shops, on-site interviewing, in-store intercepts and store audits on a national level. Our in-house staff can handle every aspect of any research project. CCR's capabilities encompass superior data collection and extend to precise data cleaning, insightful analysis and professional presentation. CCR has partnered within a variety of industries including health care, automotive, consumer goods and education. So, if you're looking for an experienced research partner, contact CCR.

**Phone 281-240-9646**
**www.ccrsurveys.com**



## Gold Research Inc.

Founded 2006 | 2,500+ surveyors
Nitin Sharma, CEO



Gold Intercepts™: We guarantee Real-Time Certified Surveys from Credentialed Surveyors™. We specialize in customer satisfaction research, exit interviews, audits and mobile surveys, anywhere in U.S. or Canada. Gold Journey Mapping™: Our customized journey maps display customers' entire paths-to-purchase by segment (and channels) to help you make targeted improvements and impact buyers positively. Gold Research-Support™: We offer survey programming, data processing, report development and project management so you can focus on more critical tasks. Gold Full Service™: Satisfaction research, concept testing and marketing/ad testing. We specialize in collecting the right insights needed to help take your business to the next level.

**Phone 800-549-7170**
**www.goldresearchinc.com**

## Informed Decisions Group Inc.

Founded 2004 | 13 employees
Colin Valdiserri, CEO

Informed Decisions Group Inc. is a full-service behavioral insights firm specializing in shopper insights, visual sciences and conversion measurement. As the first company to successfully model purchase behavior to visual attention, IDG has innovated mobile eye-tracking solutions for shelf insights, package optimization and virtual shopping for over a decade. Our approach leverages an in-house quantitative and qualitative fusion with the most innovative technologies in life-sized virtual shopping, visual and emotional measurement including micro-expression coding and neuro-measurement. Since 2004, IDG's clients have benefited from our teams' unique backgrounds in consumer psychology and decades of experience in the behavioral sciences.

**Phone 440-454-0399**
**www.idg-consulting.com**

## IntelliShop

Founded 1999 | 186 employees
Ron Welty, CEO

IntelliShop partners with clients and research firms to deliver customer experience research solutions for every touchpoint. For research firms, whitelisting our services and Web portal (InSite™) allows you to maintain your brand presence with your clients. Our panel of more than 1 million shoppers can reach any geographic location quickly and efficiently for a variety of projects. We combine the most innovative Web-based intelligence and analytics platform with our team of exceptional people to provide you with a level of expertise and extreme service that is unmatched.

**Phone 419-872-5103**
**www.intelli-shop.com**

## Ipsos Loyalty

Founded 1975 | 16,000+ employees
Nick Mercurio, SVP and Head of Mystery Shopping

Ipsos ranks third in the global market research industry and is a true leader in mystery shopping and shopper insights.

Ipsos Loyalty conducts over 1.2 million mystery shops annually for blue-chip

companies in the retail, restaurant, CPG, technology, financial services and automotive sectors. With a presence in 87 countries, Ipsos employs more than 16,000 people and has the ability to conduct research programs in more than 100 countries. Founded in France in 1975, Ipsos Loyalty is the trusted advisor to top executives of the world's leading enterprises across industry sectors on all matters relating to measuring, modeling and managing customer and employee relationships.

**Phone 425-586-5570**
**www.ipsosloyalty.com**

## Mintel International

Founded 1972
Peter Haigh, CEO

Our expert analysis of the highest quality data and market research will help you grow your business.

Mintel is the world's leading market intelligence agency. For over 40 years, Mintel's expert analysis of the highest quality data and market research has directly impacted on client success. With offices in London, Chicago, Belfast, Kuala Lumpur, Mumbai, Munich, New York, São Paulo, Shanghai, Singapore, Sydney, Tokyo and Toronto, Mintel has forged a unique reputation as a world-renowned business brand. For more information on Mintel, please visit www.mintel.com.

**Phone 312-932-0400**
**www.mintel.com**

## Mystery Shopper Services

*A Division of Business Evaluation Services*

Founded 1996 | 19 employees
Charles Stiles, CEO

Mystery Shopper Services is a full-service international market research and guest satisfaction company. With nearly 1 million shoppers, we specialize in delivering actionable information in a very intuitive format for nearly every industry, including some of the world's leading market research companies. Our 60 years of combined experience has taught us what is important with today's consumers, and we layer that in with the client's non-negotiable service standards. Those standards can be measured in several different ways, such as mystery shops, market audits and competition studies, crowdsourced solutions and video mystery shopping. We also track the pulse of your existing customer base through social media tracking, comment cards and guest satisfaction surveys.

**Phone 888-300-8292**
**www.mysteryshopperservices.com**

inform all our methodologies, emphasizing shoppers' behavior and purchase selections and confirming that brands are seen, understood and shop-able at-shelf. We also have unique offerings to understand, document and predict shopper behavior, including a global network of 20+ ShopperLabs® and unmatched scope, database and expertise in eye-tracking.

**Phone 201-346-1600**
**www.prs-invivo.com**

## Second To None Inc.

Founded 1989 | 65 employees
Jeff Hall, CEO

As a leading customer experience research agency, Second To None helps brands across North America deliver consistent, intentional and authentic consumer experiences. We are experts in customer touchpoint mystery shopping, voice of customer surveys and shopper insight studies. Solutions are end-to-end, from design through analytics, grounded in solid statistical science and strategic relevance. Our clients leverage assessments of operational standards with voice of customer feedback surveys and shopper insights for a distinct competitive advantage. Our work delivers transformative insight along with clear priorities, allowing clients to take action, effect positive change and drive improved business performance throughout their organization.

**Phone 734-302-8400**
**www.secondtonone.com**

## Secret Shopper

Founded 1990 | 50 employees
Paul F. Ryan, CEO

At the core of Secret Shopper® is our expertise in evaluating the customer experience both in the digital and brick-and-mortar worlds. Secret Shopper® focuses on evaluating every step of the customer experience journey by evaluating our clients' online, on-site and over-the-phone customer engagements. Millions of secret shoppers have registered on our Web site and performed evaluations across the globe. Secret Shopper® has the right innovative in-house team to support your product launch, merchandising needs or build an ongoing mystery shopping program. Our Minneapolis Web development team has the expertise to unleash your cutting-edge online presence while driving digital success. Come visit our Web site www.secretshopper.com to learn more and get started.

**Phone 763-525-1460**
**www.secretshopper.com**

## The Sentry Marketing Group LLC

Founded 2005 | 13 employees
David Agius, CEO

Sentry is a national customer analytics company based in Plano, Texas. We specialize in the design and management of mystery shopping and survey programs for business ranging from local chains to national brands. Sentry's reputation for delivering industry-best reports is the result of our commitment to base each program on the clients' specific needs, operating guidelines and organizational philosophy. Our integrated platform allows for mystery shopping and survey results to be delivered on the same platform. The result is a powerful business intelligence tool that allows our clients to improve customer loyalty and increase profits.

**Phone 972-987-1696**
**www.sentrymarketing.com**

# SSI (Survey Sampling International)

Founded 1977 | 4,000+ employees
Chris Fanning, President and CEO

SSI is the premier global provider of data solutions and technology for consumer and business-to-business survey research. SSI reaches participants in 90+ sample countries via Internet, telephone, mobile/wireless and mixed-access offerings. SSI staff operates from 40 offices and remote staff in 20 countries, offering sample, data collection, CATI, questionnaire design consultation, programming and hosting, online custom reporting and data processing. SSI's 4,000+ employees serve more than 3,000 clients worldwide.

**Phone 203-567-7200**
**www.surveysampling.com**

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# TRENDSOURCE
## TRUSTED INSIGHT

# TrendSource

Founded 1989 | 86 employees
Jim Caltrider, CEO

For over 25 years, TrendSource has been the leading provider of mystery shopping and market research programs. Whether you're looking to identify service gaps between customers' expectations and their experiences or understand key behaviors that will drive sales and customer loyalty, TrendSource has the expertise to deliver actionable results to achieve your objectives. Our quantitative and qualitative solutions will provide you with the necessary insights that will impact your customers' buying behaviors.

**Phone 619-718-7467**
**trustedinsight.trendsource.com**

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# Names of Note

■ Denver-based data and communications firm *StickyDocs* has appointed the following to its advisory board: **Sharon Harris**, principal product manager, mobile, at AOL; **Cavel Khan**, who serves in a lead CPG sales capacity for Twitter; and **Daniel Cherry**, chief marketing and innovation officer for the New Jersey Devils and the Prudential Center entertainment complex.

■ San Mateo, Calif., marketing software and solutions firm *Marketo Inc.* has named **Steve Lucas** as its new CEO.

■ Columbia, Md., marketing agency *Merkle* has appointed **Michael McLaren** as executive global director for its high-tech and business-to-business practices. The firm also named **Charlie Weiss** to its leadership team as general manager, media and publisher solutions. Weiss will be based in the firm's New York office.

■ *Marketing Applications Inc.* (MApps) CEO **Ikuo Hagino** has been named CEO of Japan-based sample and survey software firm *dataSpring*. MApps had acquired dataSpring in a stock swap and Hagino's assumption as CEO is the next step in the merger process. Hagino will serve

Hagino

as CEO of both firms moving forward.

■ *Research Now*, Plano, Texas, has named **Mayer Danzig** as senior vice president of product management.

■ Indianapolis customer experience consulting firm *Walker Information* has named **Jennifer Batley** as senior vice president.

Batley

■ **Julia Stahl** has been promoted to call center manager for Columbus, Ohio, firm *Complete Research Connection*.

■ U.K. researcher *Join the Dots* has appointed **Anjul Sharma** as senior client director, a newly-created role, to lead the Unilever account team. The firm has also recently appointed **Stacey Kohalny** as a research director in Manchester.

Sharma

■ Warren, N.J., researcher *Lightspeed* has appointed **Wiepke van der Wal**, its marketing director of Europe, Middle East and Africa, as national representative Netherlands for ESOMAR. She was appointed alongside **Kjell Massen**, senior researcher and partner of Ruigrok NetPanel.

van der Wal

■ In London, **Tanja de Vries Robles** has joined panel and survey software firm *dataSpring* as senior account manager. The hiring coincides with the firm moving into new offices in London's West End.

■ **Marie Patenio**, VP research and consulting for researcher *Verve*, has been appointed to lead the firm's Chicago office as Tim Martin, who was seconded to the U.S. to open the office, returns to London. The company has also hired **Jon Allison** as senior director and **Donny Spano** as research manager for the Chicago office. The team has

Patenio

Allison

Spano

Shah

Ackland

David

moved to larger offices in the Chicago Loop. Additionally, **Shruti Shah** has been hired as an analyst and **Melanie Ackland** and **Natasha David** have been hired as community managers for Verve's Toronto office.

■ Atlanta-based restaurant consulting services firm *Goliath Consulting Group* has hired **Cheryl Wilson** as CMO and tapped **Robert Marshall** as vice president of strategy and consumer insight.

■ **Tom Dailey,** former GfK president, has joined San Jose, Calif., mobile data collection and analytics company *bnocular* as an advisory board member.

■ *Directions Research,* Cincinnati, has promoted **Liz Sparks** to associate research analyst.

Sparks

■ Analytics and insights firm *Blueocean Market Intelligence,* Seattle, has made the following executive leadership appointments: **Anish Nanavaty** as head of Americas; **Joseph Sursock** as senior vice president – Europe; **Muneer Ahmad** as vice president – life sciences; and **Dan Foreman** as non-executive director and member of its advisory board.

■ Kearney, Neb., health science marketing and communications firm *SCORR Marketing* has appointed **Kelly DeBoer** as director of health care.

■ *Cars.com,* Chicago, has appointed **Brooke Skinner Ricketts** as CMO.

■ **Sarah Longacre** has joined Iselin, N.J., researcher *Schlesinger Associates* as vice president, client development. She is based in San Francisco.

■ Brand communications and marketing services firm *Partners & Simons,* Boston, has promoted EVP and general manager **Andrew Pelosi** to president.

Longacre

■ *GfK,* New York, has appointed **Gary Schanzer** to lead its Point-of-Sale teams in North America – including pet, optics and tire retail panels – and GfK's Value-Added Services

in e-commerce content, discount ad tracking and technology research for investment firms.

■ St. Petersburg, Fla., digital media company *Catalina* has appointed **Andy Heyman** as CEO. Heyman replaces interim CEO **Greg Delaney**, who will resume his responsibilities as a member of the firm's board of directors.

■ Nashville, Tenn., prediction research and analytics firm *Consensus Point* has appointed **Megan Rome** as vice president, client service and marketing.

Rome

■ Customer loyalty association *Loyalty360* has appointed **Jeff Sopko**, president and co-founder of Columbus, Ohio, agency *Baesman Insights & Marketing*, to its board of advisors, effective immediately.

■ Research company *Verve* has added two new hires to its London office: **Nick Baker** as MD research and consulting, and **Emma Beech** as VP operations Europe.

■ *MFour Mobile Research*, Irvine, Calif., has hired **Elliot Seid** as a research associate for its operations team. In addition, **Arian Ashraghi** has been tapped as a software engineer and **Alex Oakley** has been added as a quality assurance engineer.

Seid

■ Salt Lake City data-driven strategy firm *Cicero Group* has named **Trent Kaufman** as CEO. Kaufman

succeeds the company's founder, **Randy Shumway**.

■ Quincy, Mass., digital marketing products and services firm *Propel Marketing* has appointed **Max Faingezicht** as chief technology officer.

# Research Industry News

## News notes

■ **ComScore**, Reston, Va., has been granted accreditation by the Media Rating Council for Sophisticated Invalid Traffic detection and filtration of desktop and mobile Web traffic.

## Acquisitions/transactions

■ New York-based private equity firm **Kohlberg & Company** has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire the ownership interest in Los Angeles-based researcher **MarketCast**. Terms of the agreement were not disclosed.

■ Newtown Square, Pa., firm **Research America** has added Clarkston, Mich., research firm **Intellitrends** to its corporate family of research companies. Intellitrends will continue to operate under its own trade name as a wholly-owned subsidiary of Research America Inc. Intellitrends founders Marlene and Keith Stone will transition to senior consulting roles within the company.

■ **Google**, Mountain View, Calif., has acquired Milpitas, Calif., eye-tracking company **Eyefluence**.

■ Newtown Square, Pa., firm **Research America Inc.** has acquired Cincinnati-based firm **Repass Research and Strategic Consulting**. The Repass staff in Cincinnati will

remain in place and will continue to serve the firm's client base.

■ U.K. digital marketing agency **Fat Media** has acquired London-based research firm **Ronin Development Corporation**.

■ **IBM**, Armonk, N.Y., has acquired the **Expert Personal Shopper** (XPS) division of Oakland, Calif., digital customer experiences firm **Fluid**. The acquisition includes the XPS solution, a dialogue-based product recommendation platform developed by Fluid that uses IBM Watson to personalize customer experiences and improve product discovery. The XPS solution and key members of the XPS team will become part of IBM iX (Interactive Experience).

■ Great Neck, N.Y., research company **Lieberman Inc.** has acquired **FRC Research**, a New York-based company specializing in the CPG category.

■ Columbia, Md., marketing agency **Merkle** has acquired **Axis41**, a Salt Lake City-based digital agency focused on customer experience. This is Merkle's first corporate acquisition since joining the Dentsu Aegis Network in August 2016. Axis41's staff of more than 170 employees will join the Merkle team.

■ **W2O Group**, a San Francisco-based network of digital, marketing and communications firms, has acquired **Marketeching Solutions LLC**, a New Hope, Pa., research and social listening consultancy focused on health care and life sciences. Marketeching will become a wholly-owned subsidiary of W2O Group and will be operated independently by Founder Kevin Johnson, who will remain president and report to Paul Dyer, president of W2O Group's Analytics and Insights practice.

■ **MM-Eye**, a U.K.-based research firm for the automotive industry, has been acquired by U.K. marketing communications agency **hps group**. MM-Eye will

remain a separate business with no changes in staff or location.

■ The boards of directors of Paris-based researcher **Ipsos** and **LT Participations** have approved terms and conditions of a merger project between the two firms. LT Participations was created in 1988 by Didier Truchot, founder, chairman and CEO of Ipsos, and his partner, Jean-Marc Lech, with the purpose to control Ipsos. Following the death of Lech in 2014, Truchot assumed sole control of LT Participations on a temporary basis, and thus of Ipsos. LT Participations is currently 52.2 percent held by Truchot and his company, DT & Partners, 35.8 percent by Sofina and 10.4 percent by FFP Invest, with the remainder being held by group managers. In September 2016, 144 Ipsos executive managers and senior managers created Ipsos Partners SAS, which used funds to take – via a capital increase – a 19 percent stake in the share capital of DT & Partners and secure a long-term role of the company as Ipsos' reference shareholder.

■ Flower Mound, Texas, marketing solutions firm **Ivie & Associates** has acquired Dallas-based digital strategy agency **BuzzShift**.

■ Melville, N.Y., customer engagement optimization firm **Verint Systems Inc.** has acquired **OpinionLab**, a Chicago-based voice of the customer listening solutions company. Through the acquisition, Verint will extend its Customer Engagement Optimization portfolio to include the ability to measure and act on digital customer experiences in-the-moment.

## Alliances/strategic partnerships

■ Chicago-based researcher **IRI** and **Research Now**, Plano, Texas, are expanding their relationship to create a data set for the CPG industry. The capability combines 1.1 million of Research Now's consumer panelists with IRI's purchase-based data assets and predic-

tive models, which provide insights into consumer motivations, psychographics, life stage and lifestyle characteristics, shopping behavior and media habits.

■ **Methodify**, the research automation platform of Toronto-based digital innovation company **Delvinia**, and Canada-based research firm element54, have partnered to offer a new research methodology on the Methodify platform. The AdTrack Express solution, developed by element54, allows marketers and researchers to optimize their brands' creative and media investments with in-market customer feedback and normative targets across key success benchmarks.

■ The **AOL Consumer Analytics & Research Group** has partnered with data visualization and reporting software firm **Dapresy**, Boston, and used its visual business intelligence tool to create the AOL Insights Center dashboard tool.

■ Professional services company **Accenture**, New York, has expanded its strategic alliance with San Francisco-based omnichannel personalization firm **RichRelevance** to strengthen the capabilities of Accenture Interactive and boost the personalization services it delivers to clients. As part of the expanded relationship, Accenture Ventures has made a minority investment in RichRelevance.

■ Columbus, Ohio, business intelligence solutions firm **Prosper Insights & Analytics** and think tank **Fung Global Retail & Technology**, New York, have expanded their strategic alliance to include a co-branded Amazon Shopper Intelligence service. The service combines Fung Global Retail & Technology analysis and commentary with input of U.S. shoppers from Prosper.

■ In Wilton, Conn., researcher **Toluna** has announced a strategic partnership that will provide increased access to patients for survey research. Toluna's

Healthcare Practice, which has provided access to physicians, pharmacists, nurses and medical professionals and ailment sufferers, will now have increased access and approach to hard-to-reach patient segments.

## Association/organization news

■ **The Direct Marketing Association** (DMA) is rebranding and repositioning to become the **Data & Marketing Association**, coinciding with its 100th anniversary. DMA has also elected Michael McLaren, executive global group director at Merkle, as chairman of the board; Jennifer Barrett Glasgow, global privacy officer emeritus at Acxiom, as vice chairman; Steve Wagner, group president – marketing services at Experian, as secretary; and Steve Froehlich, senior vice president, national direct marketing at ALSAC/St. Jude Children's Research Hospital, as treasurer. Kevin Akeroyd, CEO of Cision; Luci Rainey, senior vice president, consumer marketing at Comcast; and Cory Treffiletti, vice president of marketing and partner solutions at Oracle Data Cloud, have been elected to the DMA board.

■ **The Marketing Executives Networking Group** (MENG) will become part of the **American Marketing Association** (AMA), giving MENG members access to AMA member benefits. Additionally, MENG and eligible AMA senior marketing executive members will be invited to join a new AMA Executive Circle, which will develop programming and produce content for executive marketers.

## Awards/rankings

■ **Mike Kelly**, CEO of the Americas for health care research and consulting firm Kantar Health, New York, has received the 2016 R.R. Fordyce Award from the **Pharmaceutical Marketing Research Group**.

■ **PlayFULL Insights**, a qualitative research application co-created by Karen Lynch and Siri Lynn, received the **2016 Next Gen Market Research Disruptive Innovator Award**, which recognizes companies and individuals that have demonstrated leadership as change agents and made contributions to drive research industry progress.

■ New York-based research consultancy **Benenson Strategy Group** (BSG) received the top prize in the audience segmentation category for its work with the **Automobile Association** (AA) at the Data Storytelling Awards ceremony, a Marketing Week event. BSG's winning entry, The Watershed Moment: Segmenting for Transformation, was based on the segmentation work conducted by its U.K. office that helped the AA understand the new consumer landscape and connect with its members.

■ Oslo, Norway, research solutions firm **Confirmit** has expanded its recognition program to include the Young Market Researcher Awards program, which will highlight and reward the work of 20 market researchers who are in their twenties and helping to grow and evolve how researchers analyze data and provide insight.

■ Alpharetta, Ga., online sample provider **P2Sample** has been ranked a fastest-growing company on Deloitte's **Technology Fast 500**, a ranking of the 500 fastest-growing technology, media, telecommunications, life sciences and energy tech companies in North America. P2Sample grew 213 percent during this period.

■ U.K. video insight firm **Voxpopme** has been named the Midlands finalist for professional services firm KPMG's **Best British Mobile Startup 2017** competition. KPMG will take Voxpopme, along with three other finalists from London, Bristol and Leeds, to the Mobile World Congress in February. The four finalists will showcase their businesses to judges

and investors for the chance to be named Best British Mobile Startup 2017.

## New accounts/projects

■ San Francisco-based financial services company **Bank of the West** and Costa Mesa, Calif., researcher **J.D. Power** have signed a multi-year agreement. Under the agreement, Bank of the West will leverage J.D. Power's customer data analytics platform to deliver insights about customer needs and how customers want to engage across the bank's digital and physical channels.

■ **GfK Entertainment**, Germany, has been commissioned to compile aggregated digital sales transactions of movies and television programs for 17 countries. Under the agreement with **The Digital Entertainment Group**, GfK Entertainment will produce separate country analyses for the Internet video-on-demand and electronic sell-through distribution channels, letting subscribers compare titles and genres for different formats and allowing them to plan their distribution, merchandising, marketing and digital strategies.

## New companies/new divisions/relocations/expansions

■ Lake Havasu City, Ariz., loyalty agency **All Digital Rewards** has opened an additional California office in Irvine.

■ **The Customer Data Platform Institute** has launched to help bring awareness of customer data platforms to marketers. The Institute, managed by Swarthmore, Pa., marketing technology and analysis firm Raab Associates, includes a library of white papers, surveys, evaluation guides, case studies and product information; a daily newsletter and blog; a public forum for marketers and industry experts; and directory of industry vendors. The Institute was founded by David Raab and will include an advisory board of marketing practitioners and sponsor experts.

■ U.K.-based professional services firm **Maru Group** has rebranded its community insights research division as Maru/Matchbox, a sector-focused consumer intelligence firm. The company has been operating as MARU/VCR&C since being

acquired from Vision Critical in April 2016. Additionally, voice of the customer firm Maru/edr has launched a North American business in New York following continued investment from Maru Group. Maru/edr North America will be led by Ted Chen.

■ London-based insight consultancy **Firefish** has launched Insider, a new insight communication and activation agency that will offer solutions for communicating, activating and embedding research insight within the wider business. The new venture will be led by John Sayers, who previously headed up the firm's in-house insight film unit Firefilms.

■ Customer experience consulting firm **Walker Information** broke ground on a new headquarters facility on the north side of Indianapolis. Real estate developer PK Partners and Walker partnered to invest $11 million in the new 54,000-square-foot building. Walker expects to complete the move by the end of 2017, relocating from its current facility. The company is also expanding its range of services and consulting capabilities.

■ **The Integrated Media Research Center** (IMRC), an online resource for cross-discipline marketing knowledge, has been launched by a consortium of marketing agencies and professionals representing organizations involved in different aspects of marketing, including direct marketing; research; media planning; data analytics; advertising; and the U.S. mail. Collectively, these executives form the IMRC board of advisors. The IMRC Web site includes an archive of research and case studies on best marketing practices and is designed to encourage an ongoing discussion among marketers about the most effective use of different marketing channels.

■ Digital transformation platform **Publicis.Sapient**, part of communications firm Publicis Groupe, has merged digital agencies SapientNitro, Boston, and Razorfish, Seattle, to form **SapientRazorfish**.

■ **IBM**, Armonk, N.Y., has launched its Watson IoT Consulting Solutions practice to give clients guidance on managing industry-specific IoT adoption challeng-

es. The practice will include a network of consultants, data scientists and design and security experts across IBM Watson IoT headquarters in Munich and in eight other IBM IoT centers across Asia, Europe and the Americas. The first priority industries include automotive, electronics, industrial products, insurance, retail, telecommunications, transportation and buildings.

■ **Andrew Reid**, founder and president of corporate innovation for Canada-based customer intelligence platform provider Vision Critical, has launched **VC LABS**, a new start-up focused on developing software applications that will extend the value of insight communities. Reid will leave the executive team at Vision Critical but will continue to be a significant shareholder and active board participant.

## Research company earnings/financial news

■ Paris-based researcher **Ipsos** reported revenue of €431.7 million for third-quarter 2016, up 0.9 percent compared to the same period last year.

■ **Facebook**, Menlo Park, Calif., reported revenues of approximately $7 billion for third-quarter 2016, a 56 percent increase year-over-year. Daily active users were 1.18 billion on average for September 2016, an increase of 17 percent year-over-year.

■ Stamford, Conn., researcher **Gartner Inc.** reported total revenue of $574.1 million for third-quarter 2016, an increase of 15 percent over third-quarter 2015.

■ Stamford, Conn., technology insights and advisory services company **Information Services Group** reported revenues of $51.9 million for third-quarter 2016, compared with $51.4 million in the prior year, an increase of 2 percent in constant currency.

■ In the first nine months of 2016, **GfK Group**, Nuremberg, Germany, reported sales of approximately €1.08 billion, reflecting a decline of 1.7 percent. The Consumer Choices sector achieved growth of 5.4 percent, while Consumer Experiences reported a decline of 7.4 percent.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**The MREF** will be taking a vision trip to Haiti to visit The Joseph School and other schools on **January 12-15**. Visit mrgivesback.org.

**Schlesinger Associates** will hold a complimentary 360° Immersive Video Workshop on **January 17** at 3:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. at **Schlesinger Los Angeles**. Visit bit.ly/2fPlrzB.

**IQPC** will hold its Call Center Week Winter 2017 event on **January 17-20** at the Sheraton New Orleans Hotel in **New Orleans**. Visit www.callcenterweekwinter.com.

**QRCA** will hold its 2017 QRCA Annual Conference on **January 18-20** at the JW Marriott Los Angeles L.A. LIVE in **Los Angeles**. Visit www.qrca.org.

**Corinium Global Intelligence** will hold its Chief Data & Analytics Officer Central America event on **January 24-25** in **Mexico**. Visit www.cdaoamericas.com.

**MRS** will hold its Kids and Youth Research Conference on **January 26** in **London**. Visit www.mrs.org.uk.

**SampleCon 2017** will be held on **January 30 - February 1** at the Ritz-Carlton in **New Orleans**. Visit samplecon.com.

**The 2017 Pharma Market Research Conference (USA)** will be held on **February 1-2** at the Hilton Parsippany Hotel in **Parsippany, N.J.** Visit pharmamarketresearchconference.com.

**The Merlien Institute** will hold its Qual360 Europe 2017 event on **February 15-16** in **Amsterdam**. Visit eu.qual360.com.

**Applied Marketing Science** will hold a workshop titled, 'Voice of the Customer Fundamentals for Medical Product and Service Innovation,' on **February 15-16** at the Marina del Rey Marriott in **Marina del Rey, Calif.** Visit bit.ly/2gPlWdZ.

**AMA** will hold its 2017 Winter AMA Conference on **February 17-19** at the JW Marriott Orlando Grande Lakes in **Orlando, Fla.** Visit www.ama.org.

**The 2017 Pharma CI Europe Conference and Exhibition** will be held on **February 21-22** at the Prague Marriott Hotel in **Prague**. Visit europe.pharmaciconference.com.

**The Quirk's Event – West Coast** will be held on **February 28 - March 1** at Hotel Irvine in **Irvine, Calif.** Visit www.thequirksevent.com.

**Centaur Media** will hold its Insight '17 event on **March 8-9** at Olympia Central in **London**. Visit www.insightshow.co.uk.

**The Quirk's Event – East Coast** will be held on **March 21-22** at the Marriott Brooklyn Bridge in **Brooklyn, N.Y.** Visit www.thequirksevent.com.

**ESOMAR** will hold its 2017 MENAP forum on **March 21-22** in **Dubai, UAE**. Visit www.esomar.org.

**PRYSM Group** will host The B2B Marketing Expo on **March 28-29** at ExCel London in **London**. Visit www.b2bmarketingexpo.co.uk.

**NMSBA** will hold its Neuromarketing World Forum on **March 29-31** in **London**. Visit www.neuromarketingworldforum.com/en.

**The Southwest and Northwest MRA** will hold their Las Vegas Conference on **March 29-31** at the Paris Hotel and Casino in **Las Vegas**. Visit www.swmra.org.

**The Merlien Institute** will hold its Qual360 North America 2017 event on **April 5-6** at The Gallup Building in **Washington, D.C.** Visit na.qual360.com.

**The MSMR Alumni Association** will hold its Marketing Research Conference on **April 13**. Visit msmralumni.org.

**PMRG** will hold its Healthcare Marketing Researchers Connect event on **April 24-26** at the Caribe Royale in **Orlando, Fla.** Visit www.pmrg.org.

**The Merlien Institute** will hold its MRMW North America 2017 event on **April 25-26** in **Chicago**. Visit na.mrmw.net.

**PAA** will hold its 2017 Annual Meeting on **April 27-29** at the Hilton Chicago in **Chicago**. Visit www.populationassociation.org/sidebar/annual-meeting.

**The Conference Board** will hold its 13th Annual Customer Experience Conference on **May 4-5** at the New York Marriott Downtown in **New York**. Visit www.conference-board.org.

**LIMRA** will hold its 2017 Marketing Conference on **May 31 - June 2** at the Renaissance Nashville Hotel in **Nashville, Tenn.** Visit www.limra.com.

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

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# 10 minutes with...

## Nancy Vogt
*Vice President, Customer Experience Program Manager, Zions Bank*

**You've worked in the MR industry for 25 years. How have you seen the industry evolve?**

The field of market research has undergone so many changes over the course of my career. When I started in the business as a project manager on the vendor side, almost all of the research projects I managed were conducted by phone. I remember monitoring our outbound calls and listening to respondents as they answered our questions. We literally heard the customer's voice in those days. I could hear which questions seemed interesting to respondents, which ones they were eager to answer, which questions were confusing or unclear and the point at which they started to become impatient with the length of the survey.

By the early 2000s, research had transitioned to primarily online data collection, which allowed enormous cost-savings and new capabilities, such as the ability to include images and video. Online surveys were a novelty in the early days, so response rates were higher and we were better able to keep a respondent's interest. Online survey panels let us target specific demographics and craft lengthier surveys for respondents who were being compensated.

In recent years, as we've become ever more cognizant of survey fatigue, we've had to think long and hard about our priorities when designing a survey, considering each question to decide whether it is just "nice to know" or whether the response will be actionable. We've also had to think about how to make our surveys as interesting, fun and convenient for the respondent as possible. Surveys are shorter, more conversational and more mobile-friendly.

**What role has technology played in how the companies you've worked for choose to outsource vs. insource research? How do you see this evolving?**

Another significant shift in the marketing research industry was the introduction of in-house survey and panel management platforms. The flexibility and cost-savings of these platforms have been significant. Prior to this new technology, market research projects were usually outsourced. Companies tended to rely on outside expertise, especially those without an in-house research staff. Over the past 10 years or so, more and more companies have acquired do-it-yourself survey platforms and use has proliferated among wider groups internally, leading to the thinking among many that no training or experience is needed to conduct survey research beyond learning how to program the survey platform. I think most companies will find that there is a middle ground, depending on the complexity of the project.

**What are some of the challenges you face when monitoring customer feedback from a variety of channels?**

We have so many channels now to hear from our customers, including ongoing relationship surveys; transactional surveys; unsolicited customer feedback received through our Web site and call center; our retail mystery shopping program; and social media. We often receive feedback on the same topic or issue through multiple channels and it's a challenge to integrate everything into one coherent picture but we are looking at ways to bring the data across channels into one platform for integrated dashboard reporting.



*"In recent years, as we've become ever more cognizant of survey fatigue, we've had to think long and hard about our priorities when designing a survey, considering each question to decide whether it is just 'nice to know' or whether the response will be actionable."*