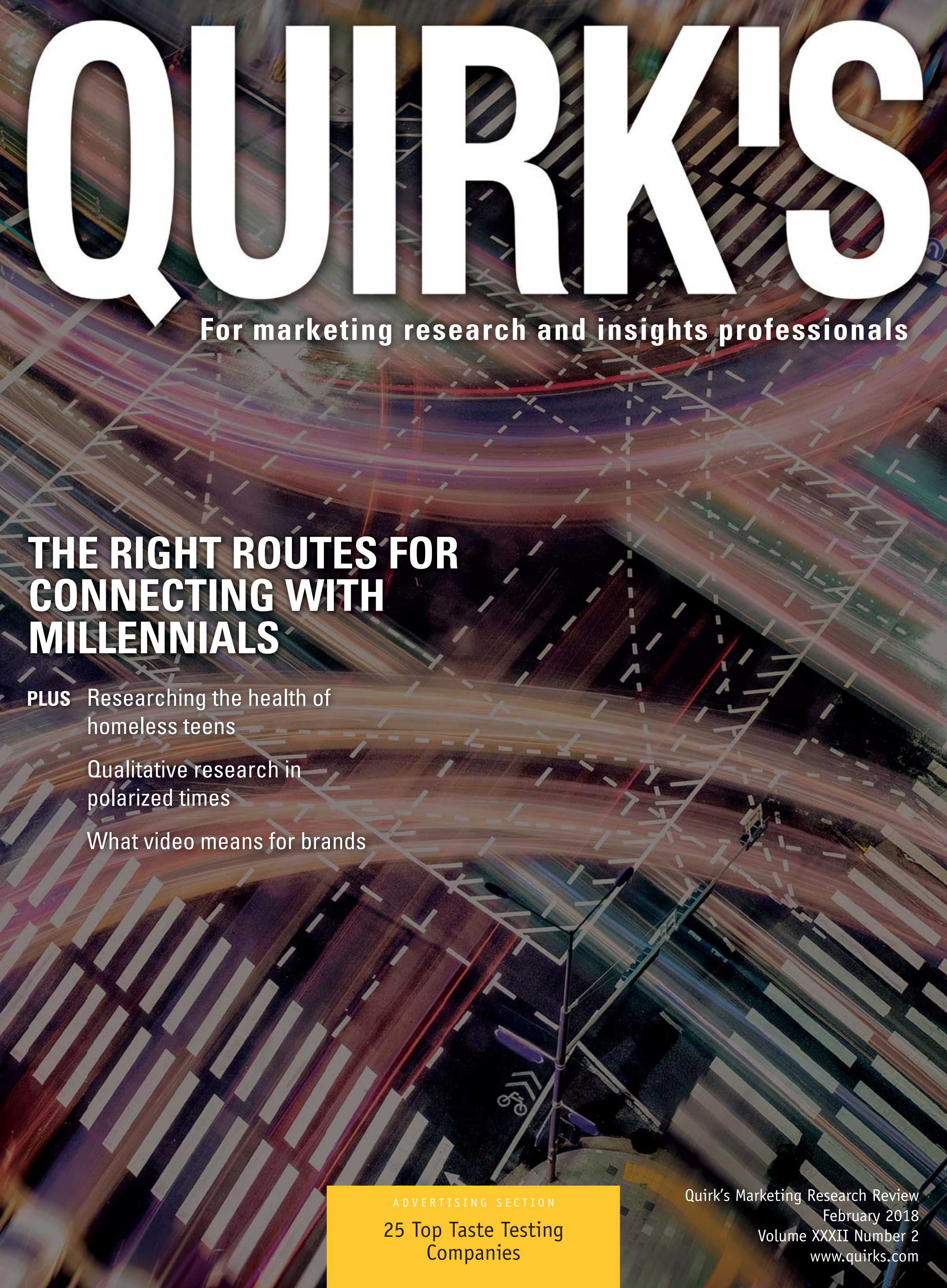

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Quirk's Marketing Research Review
February 2018
Volume XXXII Number 2
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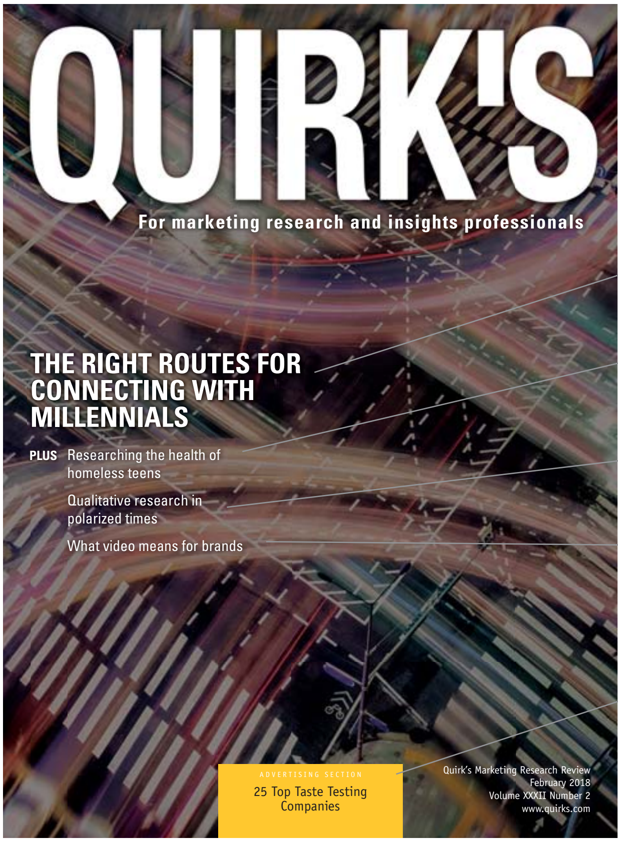

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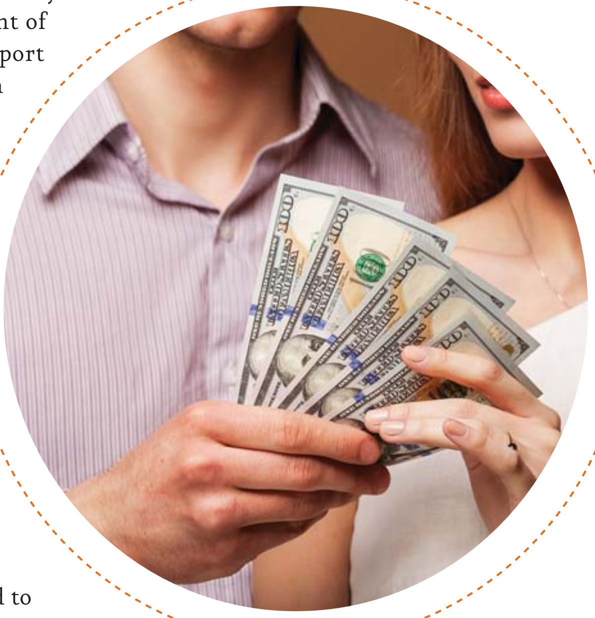
nimble.

••• financial services research

After the honeymoon, think about money soon

TD Ameritrade's Marriage & Money survey of 1,000 married and 1,000 unmarried adults (ages 37 and older) found that getting married can serve as a trigger for Americans to focus more on their finances, particularly for men. In fact, 37 percent of married Americans report paying more attention to their finances after getting married.



Married couples also report additional shifts in perspective and habits. A third of married men and 28 percent of married women report saving more money after getting hitched. Thirty-two percent of married men and 28 percent of married women started to worry more about the future. Three in 10 (30 percent) married individuals rely on their spouses to help manage their savings and investments (39 percent of females vs. 19 percent of males). And 30 percent of married Americans say the moral support that keeps each other on track is the biggest financial benefit of getting married.

While marriage often serves as an incentive to financial responsibility, it also has its challenges. One-third (34 percent) of married Americans report that they are not always "financially faithful" to their spouse and 39 percent don't believe their spouse is entirely financially faithful to them. On average, married Americans report having argued with a spouse about money 4.3 times in the past year.

www.quirks.com/articles/2018/20180201.aspx

••• data analysis

Data pros not analyzing much data

A survey by TMMData, State College, Pa., in partnership with the Digital Analytics Association, shows that nearly two in five (38.7 percent) data professionals are spending more than half of their work week on tasks unrelated to actual analysis: 43.8 percent of managers reported that 51 percent or more of their team's work week is spent collecting, integrating and preparing data rather than analyzing it, while 31.3 percent of analysts said they spend 21 or more hours a week on data housekeeping.

Forty-three percent of respondents said access was one of their top-two analytics challenges. Nearly three in five respondents (56.9 percent) said it takes days or weeks to access all the data they need and nearly 10 percent say they can rarely or never access a complete range of data sources. Only 33.4 percent of data professionals are immediately able to access all their data or can get it in less than a day.

By Joseph Rydholm, Quirk's Editor

Books offer some new thinking on brands

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Joe Rydholm can be reached at joe@quirks.com

There is surely no one-size-fits-all approach to developing a winning brand. To me, brand success often feels like a form of alchemy. Some unpredictable confluence of timing, zeitgeist, novelty, craftiness and sheer luck. The one constant seems to be creativity, whether applied to dreaming up an entirely new kind of product or determining how to market or package a less-unique one.

Ideas for sparking that creativity are a large part of the focus of the three brand-related books that have been gathering dust on my desk for several months. These are not super-new books (more like recent-ish!) and I've kept them in a stack and wanted to review them as a group and this issue's focus on brands and branding research finally gave me my chance!

The Physics of Brand by Aaron Keller, Renee Marino and Dan Wallace ($32.99; HOW Books) takes a wide-ranging, often science-based approach that nevertheless feels conversational, if a bit on the rambly side. They make the case that most of the ways we approach thinking about and measuring the value of brand are misguided and outdated – a suitable subtitle might be "Musings on the evolving definition of brand." The upshot is that moments matter. Those moments when we interact with, are introduced to or have an emotionally compelling (good or bad!) experience with a brand are what shapes our views of it. The authors drive home the essential value of a brand being authentic through and through, of having a core set of deliverables and being there for consumers time and time again. The trouble for marketers is, you can't really create that authenticity – a brand either has it or it doesn't. But what marketing can do is tell the brand's story in ways that feel authentic and true.

www.quirks.com/articles/2018/20180202.aspx

Brands and Branding by Stephen Brown ($43.00; Sage Publishing) takes a more prosaic, though no less entertaining, approach, devoting chapters to the components of brands (logos, names), their roles (they tell stories), their lives (brands are alive!), etc. Along with offering helpful reading lists at the end of each chapter, Brown includes "brand task" exercises to get you to think about brands from a variety of perspectives.

One of my favorite passages is his overview of Robert Cialdini's views on persuasion and how they are relevant to brands. Brown's Ten Commandments of Branding also offer a fairly concise roadmap of dos and don'ts for brand success.

With its overviews of brain function and discussions of the emotional impact brands have on us, Daryl Weber's *Brand Seduction* ($16.99; Career Press) covers familiar territory in its first half before getting deeper into what Weber calls the Brand Fantasy – the interconnected web of moods, feelings, associations and attitudes surrounding a brand. In the latter chapters he walks readers through the process of using projective-type techniques to explore their own feelings about the brands with which they are involved. He then cites case studies of brands such as Warby Parker and Hendrick's gin that have been able to create compelling fantasies. I appreciated his concise overview of the various research techniques that he feels are most useful for uncovering consumers' emotional responses.

Doesn't fare too well

Aside from Weber's mentions of it, marketing research doesn't fare too well in these books. The various authors cite common (and not wholly inaccurate) charges that standard research approaches are not always ideal because consumers are not reliable observers or reporters of their own behaviors nor are they good at dealing with questions about unique or groundbreaking products or services.

But as Weber makes clear in his section on marketing research, the same kind of creativity that produces to great products can also drive the research that's conducted about them, leading to new thinking and new approaches to concocting the recipe of innovation, timing and promotion that leads to brand success.

ASK THE EXPERT

Expert answers to important research questions.

What's missing from customer decision journey work?

Maury Giles
SVP, Brand, System & Journey Solutions Team Leader
Heart+Mind Strategies
512-656-3800

We are seeing an explosion of interest in the customer journey. Why? Digital and social media have dramatically changed the path to decision-making. Old models assumed that a compelling message, when repeated, would build awareness, interest, desire and finally action. Voila! In the aisle, the voting booth, the boardroom, they'd choose your brand. It's not so simple anymore. The most compelling message can fall short as a swirl of influencers, channels and options stand between your customer and the decision you need them to make.

But the old linear models remain. We hear clients talk about getting customers "into" or "through the funnel" as though decisions still follow a straight line. How do you resonate within today's journey dynamics?

Our strategy is to leverage a systems approach. We know the path is shaped and behaviors influenced by the brand and life systems in which people make decisions. We unpack these systems to identify the rational and emotional needs they have at key points along the journey. This involves assessing the discrete phases, behaviors and drivers of the journey in addition to the ecosystem of influences shaping how decisions are made. The resulting journey map captures a visual and holistic view of these dynamics to provide a common framework for your planning teams. It also allows us to isolate the role the brand must play to deliver the right solution in the right way at the right moment. Our bottom line: We architect clear imperatives for brand success.

> We know the path is shaped and behaviors influenced by the brand and life systems in which people make decisions.

John Lo
Director, Marketing Intelligence
University of British Columbia

What is the biggest misunderstanding within the MR industry regarding panel research?

Panel research is not survey research. Insight communities offer a two-way relationship with panelists, whereas traditional survey research is rather one-directional – typically an "ask and answer" type of interaction. Best practice panel research entails closing the loop for respondents on survey outcomes, creating a sense of connection and ownership over the initiative or strategy being researched. In this way, insight communities have potential to be brand-defining touchpoints for organizations, provided that they are managed as such.

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Want your firm to be featured as an expert? Contact sales@quirks.com for more information. www.quirks.com/articles/2018/20180255.aspx.

IN FOCUS

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

// Survey Monitor

••• brand research

NFL tops list of 2017's buzziest brands

Amazon, Facebook and Walmart up there too

Faced with the controversy surrounding the national anthem protests, the National Football League (NFL) topped a list of the buzziest brands in 2017, generating a total buzz of 64 percent, with 36 percent being negative buzz and 28 percent being positive buzz, according to findings from New York-based research firm Morning Consult's Buzziest Brands in America Rankings.

The rankings of the companies, brands and organizations that caught Americans' attention – positively and negatively – in 2017 were created using data from nearly 1 million surveys with U.S. adults 18+ across the United States from January to December. Respondents evaluated a randomized set of brands across a range of questions such as favorability, buzz, community impact and purchasing intent.

Tech giants dominated the upper half of the list, with Amazon (#2), Facebook (#3) and Google (#9) all landing in the 10. News rivals Fox News and CNN ranked fourth and 17th, respectively, in a politically-charged year. Brands facing public scandals including United (#7), Uber (#10) and Papa John's (#19) were within top 20.

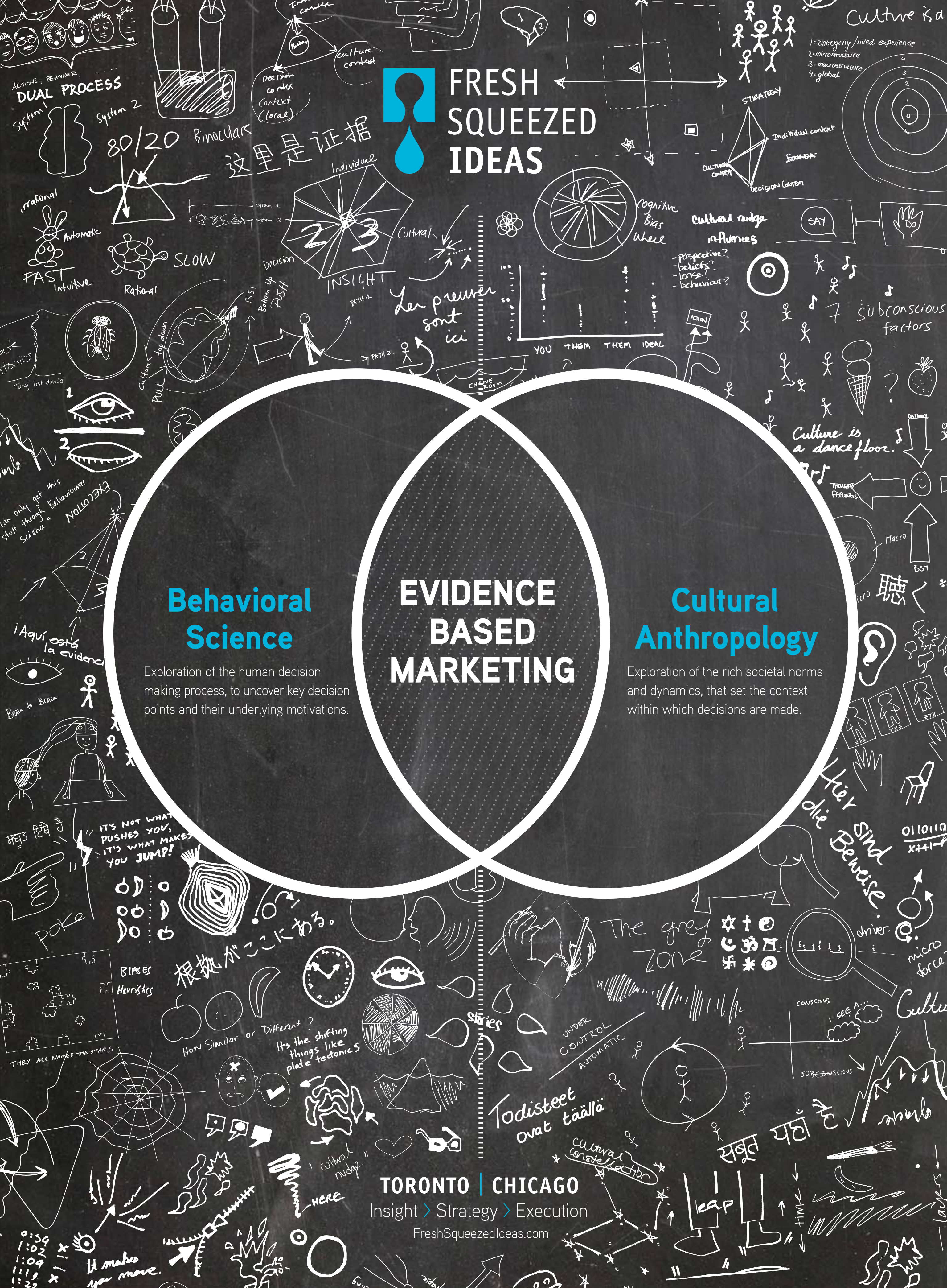
www.quirks.com/articles/2018/20180203.aspx

The Buzziest Brands of 2017

Rank	Brand	Total Buzz
1	National Football League	64%
2	Amazon	61%
3	Facebook	60%
4	(tie) Walmart	59%
	Fox News	59%
6	McDonalds	58%
7	(tie) Netflix	57%
	United	57%
9	Google	56%
10	Uber	55%
11	Apple	54%
12	Verizon	53%
13	(tie) Coca-Cola	52%
	Starbucks	52%
	Target	52%
	Walt Disney	52%
	Subway	52%
18	CNN	51%
19	(tie) Dominos	50%
	Papa John's	50%

While public perception of brands NFL, Pepsi, Uber, United and Wells Fargo took a beating last year due to multiple controversies, not all of them saw the public turn against them as a result. United Airlines' favorability dropped 20 percent following a tumultuous period with some highly publicized controversies but recovered less than six months later due to consumers' short memories and the airline industry's limited choices.

The inaugural edition of Morning Consult's Buzziest Brands surveyed 947,604 adults across the United States to rank which companies, organizations or brand names garnered the most attention, for positive or negative reasons. The data come from Morning Consult Brand Intelligence. The top 20 brands – drawn from at least 900 – caught the eyes of U.S. consumers surveyed online from Jan. 1 through Dec. 7 among a national sample of adults who were asked to indicate whether they'd seen,



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TORONTO | CHICAGO
Insight > Strategy > Execution
FreshSqueezedIdeas.com

heard or read something positive or negative about a given brand. Between 10,000 and 117,000 adults rated each brand and the results have a margin of error between 0.3 and 1 percentage point.

••• shopper insights

Express yourself – just a bit

Online consumers like a little emotion in reviews

Online reviews play an increasingly important role in consumer behavior as more Americans opt to purchase items online. Previously, studies examining the influence of reviews focused on the length of the reviews and whether they were positive or negative. As reported by Liz McCune, new research from the University of Missouri examined how expressions of emotion impact the helpfulness of a review. Among the findings, researchers observed that although some emotion was important to be persuasive, reviews perceived as being overly emotional often were ignored.

"Ranting about a bad experience may be cathartic for the author, but it is counterproductive for reviewers seeking to influence potential buyers," said Dezhi Yin, assistant professor of management in the school's MU Trulaske College of Business, in McCune's article on the study. "Overly emotional reviews appear to be discounted by readers due to their embedded emotion, even when they are providing objectively useful information."

The findings have implications for both consumers who want to craft impactful reviews and for online sellers who depend on reviews to spur sales. For reviewers, the research shows that feedback with a more balanced tone tends to be more influential – as long as some emotion is expressed.

"Our theory is that readers use emotion to infer how much effort and thought went into a review," Yin said. "When someone writes a flaming, angry review or a gushing, fawning review they are perceived as responding emotionally and not logically. At the same time, reviewers who are overly flat in expressing themselves may be perceived as unhelpful."

Yin recommends that retailers monitor online reviews, as they can provide early indications of product and service issues. However, he also said it's wise to not fret over a handful of searing reviews, as their impact is likely limited. In addition, he noted that retail sites should consider review guidelines that encourage a moderate level of emotion to elicit narratives that are most valued.

The study is based on an examination of 400,000 reviews at Apple's App store. The researchers measured the emotional intensity of each review with linguistic analysis tools, then examined the relationship between emotional intensity and "helpful" votes received. Additionally, the researchers conducted a follow-up survey and two laboratory experiments in which respondents evaluated fictional mobile app reviews that contained the same objective content but different levels of emotion.

"Results from all four studies provided evidence for diminishing returns to emotion," Yin said. "Readers were much more likely to view a review as helpful when it contained a moderate amount of emotional words and exclamations but not when it was full of such emotional markers."

The study builds on prior work done by Yin. His 2014 study titled "Anxious or angry? Effects of discrete emotions on the perceived helpfulness of online reviews" was published in *MIS Quarterly*. "Keep your cool or let it out: Nonlinear effects of expressed arousal on perceptions of consumer reviews" was published in the *Journal of Marketing Research*.

••• media research

Lots of demand for video-on-demand

Over half of households have Web-enabled device

It's no secret that in addition to traditional television, viewers also have access to a plethora of subscription video-on-demand content and virtual multichannel providers. As the options for these streaming services have grown, so have the means by which viewers can view them on their TV screens.

Consumers, in turn, are taking action. According to Nielsen's Q2 2017 Total Audience Report, 58.7 percent of TV homes in the U.S. now own at least one Internet-enabled device capable of streaming to a TV set. The emergence of such devices is satiating consumers' desire to access content with the press of a button.

Never have viewers had so many options to connect to streaming content on their television set. Whether it be an enabled multimedia device (such as an Apple TV, Google Chromecast, Amazon Fire TV or Roku), game console, or smart TV, nearly 70 million TV households in the U.S. have access to at least one. In fact, the penetration for such devices has grown by 12 percent since June 2016.

Like their overall media habits, consumers seemingly like to have a buffet of options when it comes to their Internet-enabled devices. Of the 69.5 million TV homes with at least an enabled multimedia device, game console or smart TV, 6.5 million of them have access to all three. Smart TVs in particular are increasingly approaching ubiquity and becoming more accessible to the average consumer, as one-third of TV homes now have one of these conveniently Internet-enabled television sets.

Once thought of as mechanisms used solely to play the latest video game release, Internet-enabled game consoles (a subset of all game consoles) have become a key platform through which consumers can stream the latest SVOD content. Such devices can now be found in at least 39 million TV homes – over a third of all TV homes.

Overall, more than a quarter of all TV homes (about 31 million) have at least two devices with the ability to stream content on a TV screen. A common profile of these high-tech homes is emerging as well. Homes with Internet-enabled devices tend to be young, employed and affluent – characteristics that marketers and advertisers crave in an audience.

Nearly half of enabled-device homes are under the age of 45. Enabled-device homes are more likely to have children and have a median income of about $70.5K. About 76 percent of such homes have people in the workforce, a majority of which work in white-collar occupations.

When looking at race/ethnicity, such homes also have a larger proportion of Hispanics and Asian-Americans. Hispanic homes tend to have enabled game consoles and smart TVs, as both of these devices have double-digit penetration percentages for the individual device only, as well as the highest penetration percentage (12.2 percent) for both devices simultaneously across race and ethnicity. Asian-American homes tend to embrace enabled-device technology, as over 75 percent of Asian-American TV households have at least one device.

Not only do consumers own more devices than ever before, they're also putting them to good use as adults have been spending more time with devices overall. Daily time spent for adults in the total population on overall multimedia devices increased in second-quarter 2017, continuing a trend seen from the second quarter of 2015 to the second quarter of 2016. While time spent on all game consoles remained flat, usage of apps and the Web on a smartphone or tablet saw notable lifts in time spent. Overall, media usage increased by half an hour in the second quarter of 2017.

Current trends point to the increased adoption of newer technologies in TV homes, especially as Internet-enabled devices become more widely available and increasingly more useful. With their ability to easily connect users with streaming services, these devices are vital in the effort to provide consumers with both traditionally linear and exclusively streaming content when they want and how they want, all from the comfort of the TV screen.

••• packaging research

See change and sea change

Five trends for 2018 from Mintel

Packaging will play a pivotal role in reducing global food and product waste and brands who adopt clear and succinct package messaging will be rewarded as consumers prefer brands that embrace minimalism, according to Chicago researcher Mintel's list of five trends it believes are set to impact the global packaging industry over the coming year.

Packaged planet. The throwaway culture of today will evolve into one that understands and embraces the role of packaging as a primary means to reduce global food and product waste. Consumers have long considered packaging as often unnecessary and ultimately as just waste to be disposed of. But that misconception is now changing. A focus on package innovations that extend food freshness, preserve ingredient fortification and ensure safe delivery is increasingly benefiting consumers. Brands will need to act fast by exploiting on-pack communication tools to educate consumers to the benefits packaging can bring, from extending shelf life of food to providing efficient and safe access to essential products in developed and underserved regions of the world.

rEpackage. As more and more consumers embrace online shopping, packaging will play a pivotal role in brands' and consumers' e-commerce experiences. Online shopping is becoming increasingly widespread around the globe and is near ubiquitous in some markets. However, while online shopping's key advantage is convenience, consumers expect more from their favored brands. When designing packaging to be viewed online, and transit packaging to be opened upon delivery in the home, the experience of e-commerce packaging must reflect consumer expectations from shopping with that brand in-store.

Clean label 2.0. Aiming for packaging designs that enlighten consumers' purchase decisions, brands will reject approaches that offer too much or too little as they can leave shoppers more confused than informed. Today's consumers are more informed than ever; however, brands are in real danger of being rejected if consumers feel overloaded with information, leading to the questioning of provenance, authenticity and transparency. The "essentialist" design principle bridges the divide between not enough and just enough of what's essential for consumers to make an enlightened and confident purchasing decision. Brands must bring the next generation of clean label to packaging design to provide a moment of calm and clarity for shoppers in an increasingly hectic retail environment.

Sea change. Plastic packaging adrift in the world's oceans will become the catalyst driving brands to rethink packaging in a context consumers can understand and act upon. Concerns over safe packaging disposal will increasingly color consumers' perceptions of different packaging types and impact shopper purchase decisions. Only by communicating that a brand is working toward a solution will this growing barrier to purchase be overcome. While collecting waste plastic from the sea to recycle into new packaging can raise consumer awareness, it won't solve the problem. In order to keep plastic out of the sea, a renewed effort toward the circular economy is needed to keep packaging material in use.

rEnavigate. Brands will look to contemporary packaging formats to help reinvigorate the center-of-store aisles less visited by younger consumers. Young shoppers are increasingly "shopping the periphery," visiting the fresh and chilled aisles around the store perimeter and turning their backs on processed, ambient and frozen offerings in the center of the store. The use of transparent materials, contemporary design, recyclability or unique shapes can help draw in younger consumers to the store center, making it as appealing as the burgeoning perimeter to younger consumers.

A free report on the 2018 global packaging trends is available at www.mintel.com/global-packaging-trends (registration required).


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Product and Service Update

••• media research

Nielsen tracks video on-the-go

Quality of mobile and Wi-Fi networks

Nielsen, New York, has launched Mobile Video Performance, a video performance evaluation solution for IP-based video content delivery. The solution evaluates streaming video quality on mobile and Wi-Fi networks, benchmarks data across the industry and rates individual players on factors that contribute to positive customer experiences.

Nielsen Mobile Video Performance focuses on four performance indicators: video resolution – percent of viewing time in different viewing resolutions ranging from mobile (low-definition) to HD (high-definition); start-up time – the number of seconds it takes for video to load and play; rebuffering – the total duration in seconds that the video stalls during playback; and video success rate – the ability to launch and play a video in 60 seconds.

The service uses a panel of 70,000 U.S.-based participants to conduct a combination of active and passive video tests on mobile devices around the country. Nielsen's passive testing method captures data on daily consumer mobile usage including network speeds of popular video platforms. Proprietary active testing techniques focus on the delivery and execution of pre-selected content, providing mobile operators, Internet service providers, device manufacturers and content providers a holistic view of network performance by region, consumer consumption intelligence as well as marketing insights to maximize ROI, inform product development and refine market segmentation.

According to data gathered by Nielsen, the industry's most notable mobile operators deliver HD (720p or greater) quality video 69 percent of the time. By contrast, services at the opposite end of the spectrum deliver HD quality video only 39 percent of the time. With the industry average at 53 percent, Nielsen Mobile Video Performance solution identifies which players are over-delivering and those that are heavily underperforming in providing high-quality video experiences.
www.nielsen.com

www.quirks.com/articles/2018/20180204.aspx

••• segmentation research

Product combines consumers' desktop and mobile behaviors

Pairs with Media Metrix Multi-Platform

Reston, Va., firm comScore has introduced Plan Metrix Multi-Platform, which combines consumers' desktop and mobile behavior with information about their lifestyles, interests, attitudes, demographics and behaviors. Plan Metrix Multi-Platform reports nearly 4,000 different attributes across a range of interests and activities, including automotive, beauty, electronics/computers, financial, food and beverage, health, home and living, retail and apparel, sports and leisure, travel, clothes and fashion and more.

The introduction of multi-platform data further aligns Plan Metrix reporting with comScore's digital audience product, Media Metrix Multi-Platform. Publishers who already use multi-platform audience data to articulate the size and demographic composition of their audiences now have a parallel data set that provides additional intelligence on the interests, lifestyles and behaviors of these same audiences.
www.comscore.com

••• text analysis

Lexalytics intros machine learning platform

Beta of storage framework

Boston-based text analytics solutions firm Lexalytics has launched AI Assembler, a machine learning platform designed to simplify and accelerate the gaining of insights from large quantities of natural language data. The company is also launching a limited-availability beta release of Semantria Storage & Visualization, a content storage, aggregation, search and reporting framework that provides a single access point to interact with data.

AI Assembler is a pipeline for building machine learning-based, artificial intelligence applications for natural language processing. AI Assembler includes the following: multiple curated, machine learning algorithms for analyzing a variety of text data, from short, jargon-filled tweets to long, technical contracts and research papers; automated hyperparameter optimization of the machine learning algorithms; and operationalized AI incorporating standard processes (logging, undo/redo, maintenance of gold-standard test sets, structured maintenance and improvement of models, and rebuilding of independent models) to simplify, automate and enforce key procedural action items.

Semantria Storage & Visualization connects Lexalytics' existing products – including AI Assembler, Salience, Semantria and Semantria for Excel – with a flexible search and reporting framework. Semantria Storage &

Visualization features include: rich filtering and search of processed content; content storage and aggregation with the capability of storing billions of documents in one place; and reporting and graphical representations of data insights to enable sharing across teams and departments, including templates for Tableau and other BI platforms.
www.lexalytics.com

••• research platforms

Confirmit updates Horizons

Version 23 includes machine-learning text analytics

Oslo, Norway, researcher Confirmit has added end-to-end usability enhancements and machine learning-powered analytics to the latest version of its Confirmit Horizons platform. Confirmit Horizons Version 23 offers the text analytics in Confirmit Genius, responding to the need for using the right analytics to enhance decision-making. Additional usability enhancements include new features in Confirmit SmartHub for advanced hierarchy management, for respondent upload and for feedback source-mapping. This release also introduces Confirmit Go, an app for business users who need on-the-go access to case management using Confirmit Action Management. The company's software has also been successfully audited for SOC 2 compliance and is prepared for the upcoming General Data Protection Directive.
www.confirmit.com

••• Briefly

■ London-based researcher Verve has launched Global Pop Up Communities, an online qualitative approach using multi-country pop-up communities. The communities are available in 40 major markets and a number of minor markets and are local language-moderated with video captions.
www.addverve.com

■ Amsterdam-based chat research platform Upinion has integrated with Facebook Messenger, allowing clients to invite anyone to a conversation on their Facebook page, with the goal of providing better access to respondents and Facebook followers.
www.upinion.com

■ Shelton, Conn., researcher SSI has formed a loyalty rewards partnership with casino entertainment company Caesars Entertainment Corporation. Say and Play is an online survey community created for members of Caesars Entertainment's Total Rewards program. Members are rewarded with additional Reward Credits each time they complete a survey. Reward Credits can be redeemed for hotel stays, free casino play, dining and other things.
www.surveysampling.com

■ Branded Research, San Diego, has rebranded its survey community MintVine to Branded Surveys. Branded Surveys now includes the following enhancements: Branded Pay, which offers additional reward options and improvements to cash out redemptions; Branded Elite, a new member loyalty program; and Survey Matching Engine, which more precisely assigns members with research opportunities based on their demographic and behavioral profiles.
gobranded.com

■ Study Hall Research, Tampa, Fla., is adding features to its Digital Dialogue online engagement platform for 2018, including the ability to handle larger respondent populations, expanded and enhanced image and video capabilities and enhanced summary and reporting tools.
www.studyhallresearch.com

■ Nielsen, New York, has launched its Nielsen Marketing Cloud in APAC, beginning its expansion in Hong Kong and anticipating additional APAC market launches in the near future.
www.nielsen.com

■ Ipsos Healthcare has launched the Severe Asthma Therapy Monitor in the U.S., with other markets to follow. The study will combine patient data with the perceptions of treating doctors, providing subscribers with a 360-degree view of the severe asthma treatment landscape.
www.ipsos.com

■ Colorado Springs, Colo., research firm Elevated Insights has published a new e-book, *Beating the Cheaters*, available for free at researchelevatedinsights.com.

Time to lighten that technology tool belt?

| By Jitesh Marlecha

snapshot

Jitesh Marlecha outlines how to approach evaluating your current data-gathering and analysis systems and transitioning to new ones.

With the number of available options having exploded in recent years, the universe of marketing research technology has become overwhelming. From cloud-based, low-cost DIY solutions to high-maintenance, multi-server and in-house installations, it's no surprise many organizations are overwhelmed when it comes to assessing their current marketing research systems. Especially if you've been accumulating solutions along the way, there's a good chance your tool belt is getting unnecessarily heavy.

So how do organizations that are looking to simplify their research operations settle on a single platform for gathering and processing insights? Luckily, there are some criteria that can help identify the right data platform.

Read on to learn more about how to evaluate whether your current technology is delivering what you need and how to plan for the transition to a new platform, if necessary.

Deep dive

Research teams should plan to take a deep dive into their current system to get a better understanding of its reliability and its ability to deliver critical features and support future needs. If the platform is missing key functionality now or in the future, technology change clearly needs to happen immediately.

Here are the things most people need:

Easy-to-use interface. Your data platform should not require technological knowledge to operate and should support all popular research methodologies with a click of a button. This is imperative to ensure agility. It's also critical your solution provides built-in interfaces and survey designs that are intuitive and are optimized to work across various platforms and devices. Today, this is table stakes and not having this feature could result in a poor respondent experience or lower participation rates.

Strong functionality. The solution must support all your company's needs without requiring additional builds, which can be lengthy and expensive. Some popular features that boost functionality include geofencing, Web intercepts and alarm and case management.

Geofencing is a software feature that taps GPS or RFID to closely define geographical boundaries. It benefits organizations that are struggling to collect fresh and clear feedback from consumers' lives. Geofencing can provide more insight and greater data accuracy, given its real-time abilities. It's now readily available in most industry platforms and not having this functionality may set your business back.

Web intercepts are another emerging feature that is becoming more critical with the increasing adoption of digital technologies. Web intercepts prompt visitors to answer personalized and interactive questions that will enhance product discovery. These capabilities are often found in newer platforms.

Alert and case management capabilities are helpful for their ability to boost the customer experience.

Reliable reporting. If your current solution is unable to accurately report insights, you should upgrade to a newer, more dependable model to ensure business-critical reporting mechanisms are in

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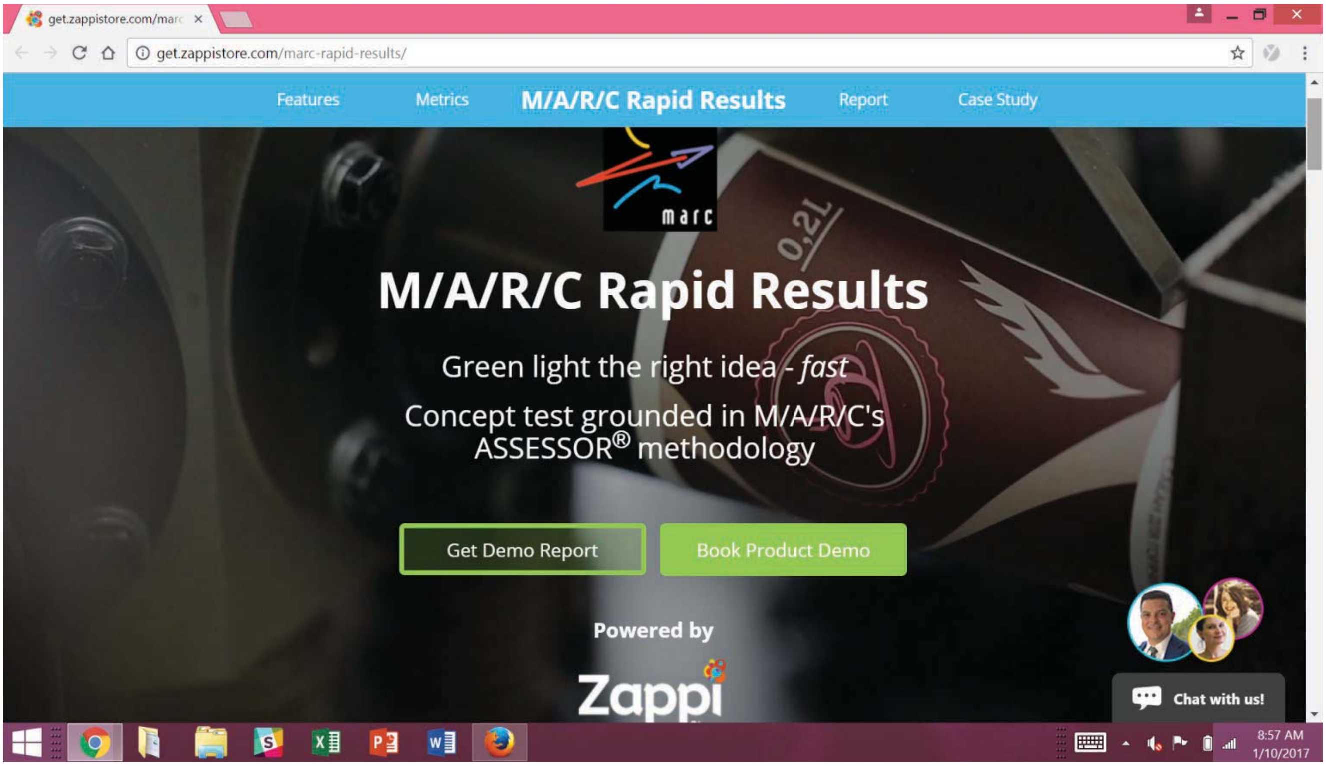

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place. The goal is to give employees back much-needed time they would spend designing, building, managing and publishing the surveys. At the minimum, your solution should support multisource data collection with excellent data management and reporting capabilities. Newer technologies, however, allow for more advanced tools like field management reports and the ability to build dashboards and publish results to a larger audience in real time. These features deliver a competitive edge. However, if your budget is slim, you should at least ensure your system not only provides open APIs and is flexible to integrate with other technologies, platforms and software but is also robust and scalable. This is necessary to support large volumes of data and respondent traffic while simultaneously providing respondents with an uninterrupted and speedy experience.

Many new platforms are starting to offer more automatic insights prompted by advanced analytics or even artificial intelligence (AI). By tapping into technologies like AI, businesses can better leverage more precise preferences and behaviors and adapt their customer profiles and campaigns to better fit their needs. This untapped information benefits retailers that are working to alter their churn rate or lessen cart abandonment, for example.

Clear picture

Once the infrastructure analysis has been performed, you should have a clear picture of whether your current platform is making the cut or if you should invest in a new solution. If your organization is planning to make the switch, the next step would be to evaluate potential vendors and systems to determine who will deliver the best capabilities in the most cost-effective manner. When deciphering which vendor is offering the best value, we suggest taking the cost and on-site vs. off-site assessment into account.

Platform costs typically include both capex investment and opex fees, so before you commit you should consider the additional fees that tend to accumulate, like consideration, transition expenses, ramp-up payments and ongoing administrative costs. In addition to the costs, you want to evaluate the partner's or supplier's ability to deliver on the features, support and resources you need to be successful.

Not the last step

By now you have evaluated your current system, explored additional vendors and decided whether your business is ready to adopt new tools or stick with existing technologies. Selecting the right platform is critical but it's not the last step. Platform transition can create business disruption, so you want to plan for a smooth deployment. For your business to fully benefit from your new solution – and make sure it's delivered on deadline and on budget – you need to have a transition plan in place.

The first step is to determine and document key foundational aspects of the transition plan. Selecting a target date to stop using the old technology and transition to the new one will ensure timely completion. It also facilitates development of a project timeline so you can think through all aspects of the transition and allocate adequate time for each activity. I suggest then categorizing a book of work and determining which projects should move first. Ad hoc surveys are usually the first to move over to a new system and tracking programs typically go last.

Next, you should put effort into assigning and aligning team members on the execution of the transition plan. Change is difficult, so to guarantee a smooth transition, it's a good idea to place responsibilities with existing team members who have some experience with the newer platform. Also, before rolling out the platform, it's wise to have a risk and contingencies plan in place. This is to ensure all team members understand the risks and potential problems they will likely face during the transition and know how to respond accordingly. Make sure you have the ability to roll back to the old platform until the new system is consistently stable.

Once the foundational elements are determined, the team will need to start building out the high-level project timeline. There are four main schedules you should keep in mind: installation, testing, live parallel and final transition. The installation schedule is when you license and set up new technologies, connect them to data servers, etc. It's wise to update the standard operating procedure during this stage, since workflows are likely to change with the introduction of new technology.

The testing schedule is where you program and review surveys on the new platform in test mode. During this stage, team members should list and share any performance issues they have experienced. Next is the live parallel schedule, which is where the team will host a survey on the new platform and run some live traffic. Fielding the first 10 percent of a study provides a like comparison without compromising the survey in its entirety. Finally, the team builds a final transition schedule for each specific research methodology. For example, build and institutionalize ad test studies or build a data migration plan for tracking surveys.

The final step is to expand your high-level timeline into a full project plan that incorporates all the activities required to deploy the new system and ensure an on-time, on-budget transition. This expansion should include additional context related to installation, training, shell development, data and design standards, ecosystem integration and data architecture. While there is a lot to keep track of, a general rule of thumb is to adapt the platform's many rules and regulations to best accommodate your company standards. Also, it's important for the team to name a dedicated project manager who is knowledgeable on the infrastructure and operating procedures.

Reap the rewards

Finished with everything? Congratulations! You are officially ready to reap the rewards of your new marketing research technology platform. Your solution is set up for success, you're ready to provide your business or clients with the insights they need and your tool belt may be just a bit lighter.

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Finding the right routes

Three ways to connect with Millennials

| By Robin D. Hafitz

snapshot

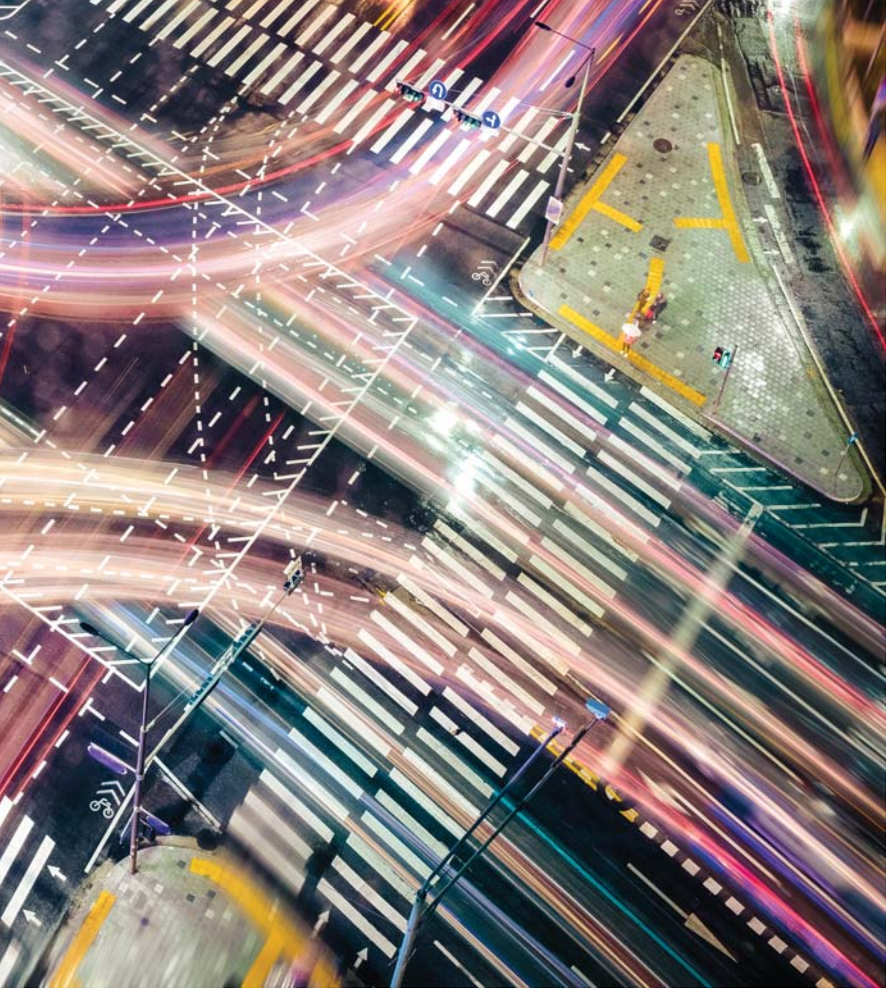
Robin Hafitz offers insights on how to better understand the confusing and often contradictory juggernaut known as Millennials.

www.quirks.com/articles/2018/20180206.aspx

With legacy industries and organizations scrambling to retain profits and relevance in this age of constant category disruption, a great deal of ink has been spilled trying to explain Millennials to those who want to target or hire them. After all, Millennials, the generation that has most recently come of age, are the segment that businesses, whether disruptors and defenders, desperately need to get it right with, if they want to survive and grow in the future. With Millennials at an age when consumer preferences and career paths are still being forged (20-to-35-years old), now's the time for brands and companies to connect with them if they want to encourage loyal bonds. Plus, at roughly one-quarter of the total U.S. population, Millennials wield tremendous influence and purchase power.

While so much has been written about them that many – especially among Millennials themselves – may be suffering from Millennial fatigue, it makes good business sense to be rather obsessed with this generation, formerly known as Y. (Since they came after Gen X, Millennials were originally dubbed Gen Y but given the name Millennials by William Strauss and Neil Howe in 1987).

And, though much is written about the group, myths and out-of-date or incomplete perceptions abound. That's unfortunate, since oversimplified "insights" may actually lead businesses away from their goal of forming solid connections. My firm regularly updates qualitative fieldwork and conducts quarterly quantitative tracking among Millennials and Gen Z, and data from our Youth IQ survey is the source for most of the statistics cited below. Three key ways to get it right with Millennials are noted – along with fresh data on behaviors and attitudes and suggestions on how to get it right with Millennials.



issues can be fraught with emotion and Millennials do not share a single identity. For example, almost two-thirds of Millennial women agree feminism is important (34 percent strongly agree), while a bit under half of Millennial men feel the same way (15 percent strongly).

Given all these differences, clearly, overgeneralization should be avoided, especially for a generation for whom diversity is a defining characteristic.

Ultimately, for companies who want to connect with Millennials, the question that needs to be asked is not "Should we connect with Millennials," but "Which Millennials should we be connecting with?" Younger or older? Urban coast or heartland? In a first job or with 10+ years of experience? Single-guy gamer or overworked suburban mom? While there are certain characteristics that can be broadly applied to Millennials – at least relative to other generations – there is no one right way to be a Millennial, or to connect with Millennials. However, one "wrong" way is to put out communications and then not respond to feedback, whether positive or negative. Two-thirds of Millennials believe their opinion truly matters to those around them and three-quarters prefer brands that pay attention to those opinions. Given the target's diversity, a brand may miss the mark. Course-correcting after a miss demands a thoughtful response to feedback – which Millennial targets will provide. Getting it right with Millennials requires empathetic targeting and an openness to having the audience provide input on how well initiatives work for them.

Notably, for those who seek to employ this audience, Millennials don't just want to be able to give feedback, they depend upon on getting it. In the workplace, 62 percent want to get feedback on how they're doing frequently. Older employers often seem to expect them to just "get with the program," not realizing that what Millennials have been programmed

First: Don't overgeneralize

It should go without saying, but some people seem to forget that Millennials are not a homogeneous group. At 23 percent of the U.S. population, and spanning a 15-year age range that arcs over several key identity inflection points (school, work, marriage, children, etc.), Millennials are diverse in life stage. At the younger end (20-28 years old), twice as many – 40 percent – are currently living rent-free with family versus being on their own and married (20 percent). Of those who pay for their own housing, 70 percent are renters. By contrast, when we look at the upper age range of Millennials, we find that fully half of 29-35-year-olds are married and 86 percent are paying for their own housing. Half of those payers own their residence. Many are raising families. Obviously, applying broad generalizations to both a 22-year-old woman living with her parents in her high school bedroom and a 33-year-old woman living with her kids in the house she's paying the mortgage on might be a mistake.

Looking beyond life stage, Millennials are heterogeneous in other ways. Their overall diversity and tolerance for diversity surpass those of all previous generations. Over half of Millennials agree that there are more gender identities than just male and female. Racially, they were the most diverse cohort ever – until eclipsed in that regard by the younger teen-and-under group known as Gen Z (who will the last majority-white generation in America, and just barely, at 51 percent). While over half of Millennials feel that "there's too much political correctness these days" (68 percent of men and 57 percent of women) – indicating a desire for honest exchange – anyone who's spent time at a college or graduate school will have seen that figuring out how to speak authentically about issues of race and gender in a way that doesn't potentially offend can be challenging. Identity for is regular feedback that can help them get and stay on track.

Second: Recognize that Millennials are engaged with technology but also ambivalent

An innovation can define a generation. The introduction of "the Pill" in 1960 was a key piece of what made the Woodstock generation who they were. In the case of Millennials, what most distinguishes them from those who came before them is that they were the kids that grew up as the Internet grew up, the first "digital natives," the guinea pigs for a huge social experiment that is still unfolding. The massive disruptive influence of the Internet on the ways human beings communicate, consume, learn and live shaped the Millennial generation as much as their parents did. And, of course, their parents and grandparents got into the habit of asking them to explain and fix household technology, so Millennials, shaped by technology, helped shape previous generations' understanding of and relationship with that technology – and became seen as leaders and peers in their childhood households as a result, on this issue if not others.

But, the stereotype of Millennials as phone-addicted, tech-obsessed social media mavens misses a key aspect of Millennials' relationship with technology – their ambivalence. The constant feedback loop of the Internet is compelling and can be helpful but can also be exhausting. Millennials have a complex, first-generation relationship with technology. They're just old enough to know that the systems they've become adept at are new (Gen Z sees technology as a given – like the weather).

So, on the one hand, over half of Millennials agree they rely too much on their phones (53 percent of males, 62 percent of females) and over 40 percent admit they've literally run into something or someone while walking because they were looking down at their phone. But almost three-quarters – 72 percent – feel that it's important for them to sometimes disconnect from technology and fully half say they're trying lately to focus on one thing at a time rather than multitasking. We've heard Millennials talk of ending dates if a partner looked at their phone during dinner and of groups of friends making the first person who pulls out their phone pay for drinks. There's a desire among many in this generation to not always be connected and thus to feel like masters of their tech, rather than mastered by it. Millennials explain their famous passion for some of the analog aspects of life – cooking, crafting and conversation, for instance – as fed by a hunger for "real" experiences. This hunger has also driven strong business for live events and pop-up retail spaces among Millennial audiences. So, while it's true that Millennials are comfortable with, habituated to and dependent on technology, they simply do not want it to be on all the time or have it in their face all the time. They want to be seen as human beings. Of course, after having put the phone aside to make a meal, many Millennials will then post pictures of that meal (almost half of Millennial guys – and a bit less than a third of Millennial women – say they sometimes do things just to create something to post about). So they go back to the phone. But what they're documenting is their non-tech side, and proudly.

When it comes to social media, Millennials are, indeed, mavens. Over three-quarters of female Millennials and 65 percent of male Millennials say they use Facebook at least a couple of times per day (Facebook is eclipsed by Snapchat for the younger Gen Z set). Over half like something on social media at least every day (that goes up to seven in 10 among women) and three-quarters have followed a brand on social media. Clearly, social media is part of the fabric of their lives and should be a key part of brands' strategies to connect with them. But Millennials are also cautious in this space and concerned about oversharing. Over 80 percent say they are "very careful with what they post on social media." The happy-to-show-everything attitude of young people during the early days of the Internet has evolved. Many Millennials feel they made mistakes on social media when younger and have grown more wary.

As Millennials have started having children, this attitude affects how they parent. Millennial parents – especially moms – are more strict with their children over technology use than Gen X parents of children of the same age. (Dads can't wait for their kids to start gaming with them.) While Gen X parents may feel that if they deny their children access to technology, it will cause them to "fall behind," Millennials are more likely to take the attitude of: "I know what I did; I know what you're going to do; I'm not going to let you. And you'll be better off because I'm putting my foot down."

So, while Millennials enthusiastically use technology, they're ambivalent about letting that aspect of life take over. About two-thirds admit they waste time on the Internet often or all the time but roughly the same percentage say they often/all the time spend time with family and have face-to-face conversations. Almost two-thirds of Millennial women and 58 percent of Millennial males even say they cook often/all the time. Nothing is more analog than the sense of taste.

What Millennials' ambivalence means for brands and businesses that want to connect with them via technology and social channels is that there's an opportunity to do more than just show up in the right social channels. Recognizing Millennials' ambivalence about technology, and their hunger to experience "real" connections as well as digital ones, might encourage offering not just digital content but live events or opportunities for people to touch, talk and connect in person. It could mean recognizing that the highest-tech solution is not always the one that most Millennials will want. Technology is in their DNA but it doesn't impress them. Use it to make things easier or better and to facilitate feedback but not for its own sake.

Third: Don't think that once you "get" Millennials you "get" youth

Finally, our data suggests strong

caution about applying the lessons learned as you master Millennials to the generation coming up behind them. There are overall megatrends that are embodied in Millennials and amplified among Gen Z (we research 13-19-year-olds), including "digitalization" – with its benefits and pitfalls (such as anxiety), diversity and individualism. However, there are also powerful examples emerging of how Gen Z is very different from their immediate elders. After a childhood of being told they could do and be anything, Millennials entered adulthood during a recessionary period, where the gap between dreams and reality forced these idealists to develop a "passion economy" in which social status was based less on career than on successful expression of passion. They invented the "side hustle," whether coder, DJ or Lyft driver. They worked on their bucket lists and tried out new things to discover their true passions.

Gen Z is showing clear signs of backlash against that Millennial mind-set. They're practical instead of idealistic, cynical instead of optimistic, snarky and polarized instead of inclusive and liberal-leaning. They're an even larger portion of the population, just as influential and connected to their parents, more economically ambitious and a few of them are now able to vote. Sharp attitudinal differences based on gender emerge in this cohort, whereas Millennial males and females are largely aligned. Marketers and employers who confuse their Ys and their Zs face the risk of getting it wrong with both.

Influential and powerful

In summary, three mistakes to avoid with the large, influential and powerful Millennial audience are:

- Overgeneralizing about this incredibly diverse audience, rather than choosing a clear target focus. Proudly individualistic, this audience also expects to both give and get feedback on how they're doing and brands that ignore that feedback do so at their own peril.
- Oversimplifying Millennials' relationship to technology to a belief that all tech is good tech or that the most high-tech solution is always the best. Millennials are tech mavens but are also ambivalent about technology, hungry for "real" experiences and seeking analog connections in their own lives and from brand relationships. Brands that are both high-tech and high-touch, and respectful of Millennials' analogue aspirations, will win with this audience.
- Confusing Millennials with youth. The generation following Millennials in some ways amplifies their traits but in other ways are anti-Millennials. Brands and companies that get it right with Millennials will get it wrong with Gen Z if they stick to the same script.

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case study

snapshot

A high school student details the challenges and surprises she encountered in conducting a study with homeless teens.

Just like us

Researching homeless teen health

| By Gillian Styring

Today's high school students are exposed to research from a young age. Polls permeate social media and our science classes apply research to the learning process on a daily basis. In fact, at our high school we use Google Forms to collect information and share it almost every week in class. So when I decided to conduct research on a real issue with real people, it didn't seem daunting. After all, how hard could it be?

Turns out, it wasn't as easy as it looked.

Growing up on a farm in Newberg, Ore., I've seen birth, life, injury and death. My interest in health has really been lifelong (I've wanted to be a surgeon since I was six years old) and has motivated me to participate in sports (soccer and pole vaulting) and lead community health projects (organ donor drives and CPR certification for high school students).

Living near Portland, it's an everyday occurrence to see homeless people pretty much anywhere around the city and I've seen kids who look to be my age among them. This drove me to ask, "How does homelessness affect health, specifically teen health?"

Bam. I had a question. I would research the health of homeless teens and compare it to the health of mainstream teens.

I planned to measure height, weight, blood pressure, resting pulse and body fat. I soon discovered that measuring body fat takes too much time in the field, so I removed that. I also found a blood pressure cuff that simply went on a person's wrist to minimize physical interaction so someone could self-administer if they didn't want me to touch them.

Also, I would ask questions about eating habits, drug and alcohol use, crime and their feelings of stress.

Before anything else, I had to know if my respondents were, in fact, living on the streets. One of the first questions asked how many nights someone slept indoors and one of the last asked them how confident they were that they would sleep indoors. Answers to those questions, in addition to others about how often and where they received their meals, qualified their responses for inclusion in the study.

I had no specific hypothesis – I simply wanted to see how homelessness affected teen health. To accomplish this, I needed many questions in my survey. I worked to streamline the questionnaire, so that someone could complete the 46 questions in five-to-10 minutes.

I first tried contacting research agencies, knowing that they do this sort of thing in shopping malls and grocery stores all the time. But finding homeless teens, a hard-to-reach population, is not easy in a suburban shopping mall. So they turned me down.

Then I reached out to various social service organizations that serve the homeless. Initially, the organizations were interested but when they saw my questionnaire, most of them turned me down. It wasn't that they weren't interested in the results but they serve the homeless with a promise of "no questions asked" and thus they felt the nature of my questions was too invasive and violated that promise. While I understood their concerns, I had questions and they had the potential to help people. Questions that aren't asked have no impact.

Beyond my comfort zone

My whole life I have been told to avoid strangers but I realized that to get answers to my questions I would need to reach beyond my comfort zone and connect directly with people I thought were different from me. So I contacted the organizers of Potluck in the Park, a "feed" for Portland's homeless held every Sunday. About 500 hungry Portlanders are served a hot meal there every week, so I thought it might be a place to connect with homeless teens.

The organizer wasn't very confident I would find teens to survey, but then he said, "It's a public park. I don't see how anybody could stop you." He told me where the few kids at Potluck typically hung out as they waited their turn. I felt a glimmer of hope.

Since I decided to take to the field, I needed to keep my equipment simple and organized. The last thing I wanted to do was be fumbling around looking for a pencil and lose a potential respondent. In a backpack, I carried a scale, a tape measure, a blood pressure cuff, six snack bags and six clipboards loaded with surveys and pencils, ready to go.

The snack bags were the incentive to take the survey. They included a Capri Sun juice drink, a bag of Doritos and a package of Junior Mints, a fun little snack to brighten their day. It was the Potluck in the Park organizer who recommended using food instead of money, since handing out cash in a crowd of homeless people (including adults, many of whom have mental or substance abuse issues) could cause, as he put it, a kerfuffle.

The day of the potluck, I was ready. The crowd was huge. Each person received a number and groups of numbers would be called to keep the feed organized and moving smoothly. I went to the area the organizer recommended and sure enough, there was a group of teenagers hanging out, waiting their turn to eat.

Not surprisingly, they eyed me pretty suspiciously.

"Hi! Would you like to take my survey?" Not the best ice-breaker in the world but it did start a conversation. And once one teen agreed to participate, others followed. That first day, I ended up with six qualified surveys. It wasn't much but it was a start.

I was surprised to find that the teens were actually pretty nice, friendly and helpful. They would provide me with suggestions on places to go to meet other teens, where they hang out or the tent communities where they lived. So, I would go there (with one of my parents or my older brother along, standing about 20 feet away, carrying extra snack bags and keeping me safe). Unfortunately, most of the time, the kids would see me coming with my clipboard and backpack and disappear before I could talk with them. I had to be smart and choosy about where I was looking, and how I approached them.

The feeds, as they are called, became the best time and place to find potential respondents. The teens were happy, with their friends and just waiting for their number to be called so that they could eat.

But it wasn't easy. When it rained, the feed moved into a dark, underground parking garage. Sometimes I went to makeshift tent encampments that made me (and my parents) a little nervous. I came home with part of a hypodermic needle stuck in my shoe. Some of the people at the camps were intimidating. And once they were fed, the

Styring kept her field equipment simple and organized, including clipboards loaded with surveys and pencils.

teens were gone like smoke.

I adjusted my pitch, from "How are you? Would you like to take my survey?" to finally a little small talk, followed by, "Hey, have you had a chance to take the Teen2Teen survey yet?" This resulted in the best response. Asking them if they had had the chance to take the survey implied that others had, that they would want to and it got them engaged in finding out what they survey was. Being generous with the snack bags helped, too.

For months I conducted the research. I became known as "the girl with the scale" at the events and was often asked by homeless adults if they could weigh themselves. Of course, I obliged.

Never find the numbers

There were times I thought I would never find the numbers I needed to complete the study, but I kept going out. When I think back on it, it's pretty remarkable that I didn't give up. What kept me going was the first group of surveys; the answers were really interesting and I wanted to see if what I saw in the initial data was true.

Ultimately, it took four months to secure 37 qualified interviews. By comparison, the local research agency who recruited the mainstream teens was able to find 47 qualified participants in a week and I completed those interviews in just four hours.

I learned how to use a data analysis and statistical software program called Stata to do the correlations and regressions. Since I was taking a statistics class that semester, that really helped, too.

There were certain findings I could have predicted: Homeless teens sleep indoors less, get less sleep in general and consume fewer meals on average than a mainstream teenager. However, I was surprised to find that the most prevalent threat to the health of homeless teens wasn't alcohol, drugs or crime but smoking cigarettes. Homeless teens are more likely to use marijuana and alcohol and they are victims of crime more often than their mainstream counterparts. However, 78 percent of them reported smoking more than one pack of cigarettes every day compared to only 15 percent of mainstream teens who smoke half a pack or less daily. This takes an obvious toll on their health now and sets them up for more health issues in the future.

Homeless teens exhibited hypertension, or high blood pressure, at three times the rate of mainstream teens. According to the Mayo Clinic, there are 10 potential risk factors for high blood pressure and homeless teens exhibit four of them at a high rate in this survey: tobacco use, diet, alcohol use and stress. But far and away, the biggest impact is that they smoke so much.

I expected that not knowing where you were going to sleep at night or how you were going to get your next meal would make a person feel extremely stressed, anxious, lonely and especially less in control of your life but it didn't. And nearly half the homeless teens said that they feel happy, which surprised me.

Surprisingly as well, homeless youth reported similar levels of feeling stress, anxiety, loneliness, and in control of their life as their mainstream counterparts.

Just the beginning

As with any research, completing the survey is just the beginning. Using the data I've collected, I can go back to some of the social service organizations I've contacted to help work with them to see if we can decrease the prevalence of smoking among homeless teenagers.

In November 2017, I presented at the TedxYouth@Portland conference, not only to shine a light on the effects of homelessness on teen health but also to change the way my fellow teens view homeless youth. I want my peers to learn what I have discovered: Homeless teens aren't so different from us.

Before I started the survey, I had ideas of what homeless teens were like. We all understand the stereotypes many have of homeless people – that they're mentally ill, addicted to alcohol or drugs, or that they're mean and miserable people. But that's not what I found with the teens I interviewed.

In many ways, they are just like me or the other kids in my class. They were nice, friendly and helpful. I actually felt bad for being surprised and it made me think differently. Ultimately, along with helping improve the health of homeless teenagers, I'd like to change how others perceive homeless teens and help them see that they're just teens like me who have fallen on hard times.

I also have a much deeper respect for what researchers go through every day, trying to contact a hard-to-reach or uncooperative population; drafting an approach that will be successful; offering compensation that is meaningful but not problematic; and designing questions that will accurately qualify a participant without creating a negative barrier between the person and the researcher.

When you approach someone you think is very different from yourself, you have to treat them with empathy and respect. You have to think about how they might react, how you would react if approached this way and, ultimately, think about those you are researching as people first, not just respondents.

If you want a great response and insightful results, sometimes you can't just run a survey through Google Forms. Digging in and going into the field directly is hard but rewarding work. Just don't forget to bring Junior Mints.

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••• brand research

Seeing is believing

The power of video

| By Zoe Dowling

snapshot

A new study shows that video marketing drives engagement and purchasing. What does this mean for brands and researchers?

Video content is becoming the new normal in brand marketing and has seen an explosion in the research space over the past 12 months. Video is being used more and more to bring the voice of the consumer into boardrooms. Video makes any viewing experience multi-sensory, which means that for consumers and stakeholders alike, it's a much more visceral and relatable experience. For brands, it means bringing consumers closer to the product via a particularly persuasive and motivating medium.

Today, more than 500 million hours of videos are consumed on YouTube each day (Wagner, 2016) and nearly half of people watch over an hour of video on Facebook or YouTube every week. In fact, more video content has been uploaded to social media over the past 30 days than major U.S. TV networks have created over the past 30 years (Lister, 2017). This growth in video on social has ultimately shifted the way we communicate. Consumers engage in many online activities – such as shopping, leisure, reading the news and listening to music – but it is socializing and sharing information that most often takes place. Three-quarters of all consumers engage in social media, according to our findings.

So what about branded video? Well, what we do know is that brands are already taking advantage of the power of video. Marketers know that four times as many consumers would prefer to watch a video about a product than read about it. Branded content can be seen across Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram. Over half of marketers worldwide say that video content, compared to all other types of content, results in the best ROI. Plus, marketers who use video even claim to grow in revenue nearly 50 percent faster than those who don't use video.

Actual impact

So, it's clear that brands are jumping on this video bandwagon. But we wanted to find out the actual impact on consumer behavior. It's true that video hosted on social media generates 1,200 percent more shares (Salce, 2016) than text and images combined, which is great

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for a brand's level of awareness. But could branded videos convert to more than just awareness?

We wanted to answer a very important question for brands: Is there any connection between video likes and shares on social media and propensity to buy? To find out if this link exists, we set out to explore the online video-sharing behaviors and motivations of 1,000 consumers in the U.S. and U.K. We sought to understand how frequently consumers view and share video content, where they do it, what sort of things they like to share and how they share them.

First, we uncovered a few not-so-surprising stats, one being that consumers really do love their funny cat videos – and videos of other cute animals and kids. But when it came to asking consumers about branded video content, we found that a majority of people (60 percent) are primarily interested in informative content first, followed by content that's entertaining (55 percent) and then funny (46 percent). We also found that branded videos excel when they are considered thought-provoking and even inspirational.

A powerful means

Consumers are engaging with branded videos even more than you may think and branded video content is a powerful means of engaging consumers: 61 percent have liked a branded video after watching it. Further, more than half mentioned visiting a Web site to find more information about a product or service after watching a branded video

The next step then is to get consumers to share your video. Regardless of the motive, video sharing is rooted in a personal connection between the sharer and the recipient. Those who go on to share the video are brand ambassadors who are actually helping to build the brand's audience. People are typically motivated to share a video for multiple reasons but beyond being entertaining or funny, video sharing often carries a more purposeful tone, with the sharer seeking to convey specific information connecting to the recipient. This includes anything from lifestyle, cooking and home repair to product research and current events. Shared branded videos are actually different than shared non-branded videos, where branded content was much more likely to be described as "makes me think" (60 percent vs 50 percent) and "inspiring" (51 percent vs 41 percent).

Most of the time, sharing takes place via social media channels, particularly Facebook and YouTube. Even though YouTube is more established as a video host site, it sits second to Facebook's billion daily active user accounts in our study, with 83 percent of respondents typically sharing and consuming video on Facebook compared to 76 percent on YouTube. Other than social media, sharing is sometimes done more privately via a messenger app or e-mail. Either way, it's mostly shared with friends and family, which is good news because studies show that consumer attitudes toward online content are directly impacted by the individual sharing the content rather than what it is.

Shares from branded content directly relate to trust. Nielsen's Global Trust report found that 83 percent of consumers trust a brand or product recommendation from family or friends and 66 percent trust consumer opinions posted online (The Nielsen Company, 2015). This means that video shared by a trusted source – whether a link within an e-mail or a shared social media post – becomes more effective in promoting a brand.

Of course, social media is a great way to create awareness and bring attention to your brand (whether it be your own personal brand or a brand profile for a Fortune 1000 company). Likes and shares will do a lot to promote your brand. But is this enough? A like is just a like after all, isn't it? Consumers are constantly scrolling through Instagram and tapping their finger twice for an instant like. Likes and sharing are great but a consumer won't actually just buy your product because they liked and shared a video – will they?

What if we told you that 54 percent of consumers who watched a branded video actually went on to visit the product or brand Web site? Yes, that's over half of them. Plus, 28 percent claimed to actually buy a product. Even more, of those who shared a branded video, 32 percent went on to purchase the product or services. This indicates that sharing branded videos coincides with deeper engagement than simply watching. That's because more discussion, online commenting and friend-tagging occurs with shared branded videos than those merely watched. So, to let that sink in, more than half visited a Web site, almost a third reported having purchased a product and over 40 percent said they had an in-person discussion after watching or sharing a brand video.

Not only entertain

We know that video is here to stay; it's a new element of the marketing mix and therefore should be treated as such. But for brands to successfully harness the power of video, they must understand the type of video that drives engagement. Successful branded videos not only entertain but are also informative, thought-provoking and even inspiring. When creating branded content, remember that consumers are primarily interested in the information. They actually want to learn about the products. Keep in mind though, this is not a hard sell, it's just informative content. But video offers a means where your consumers will actually listen to what you have to say. And don't fret; you no longer need to limit this information to the standard 30-second TV spot. In fact, it's two-minute videos that get the most shares. As long as you use the time meaningfully, the branded videos can successfully range from a six-second snippet to a five-minute story about your product. Most of all, encourage follow-up behavior and make it easy for consumers to learn more about your brand or product and take those all-important steps to purchase.

Implications for researchers

The study shows that video content is having a profound effect on engagement with information or a product across the generations. So what are the implications for researchers?

Regardless of the variety of industries researchers work in, or the variety of brands they work for, they learn from the culture that surrounds their consumers. Consumer culture is participatory, where creativity and expression drive how people relate to one another and the way in which information is consumed. It's also creativity and expression that drives the best insights. This is where video comes in. Embracing video provides a way to get closer to consumers, to really empathize with them.

As consumers engage more and more with video content it provides avenues for researchers to use video to engage with respondents at the point of data collection. Whether that's through video ethnography, focus groups or by using video open-ends in surveys, recording and posting a video as a key way of answering questions put forward by researchers now has almost no barriers to completion as video becomes the new normal. Not only do we get better, richer data from an open-ended video question on a standard quant survey, in some cases the respondent actually prefers to do it, it's more personal and they become more engaged with the study as a result, which hopefully can lead to a positive emotional connection with further surveys.

One of the key benefits of using more video in your research studies is the potential for stakeholder engagement. Facebook, for example, has shown that deeper engagement results with brands whose ads are supplemented with video. So it stands to reason that researchers can use video to drive engagement and calls to action in stakeholder communications. Video humanizes data and provides context to the voice of the customer in the boardroom, in a way that a PowerPoint slide, regardless of how well it's designed, just cannot achieve.

Grasp the power

Video is only set to grow and when brands successfully capture the power of video, it's no surprise that they report significant growth in revenue. It's also no surprise that the projected spend on mobile video ads in 2018 is nearly $6 billion for the U.S. alone (eMarketer, 2016). Brands and researchers must watch this space and grasp the power of video now, knowing that its rise to prominence as a ubiquitous communication channel is already underway.

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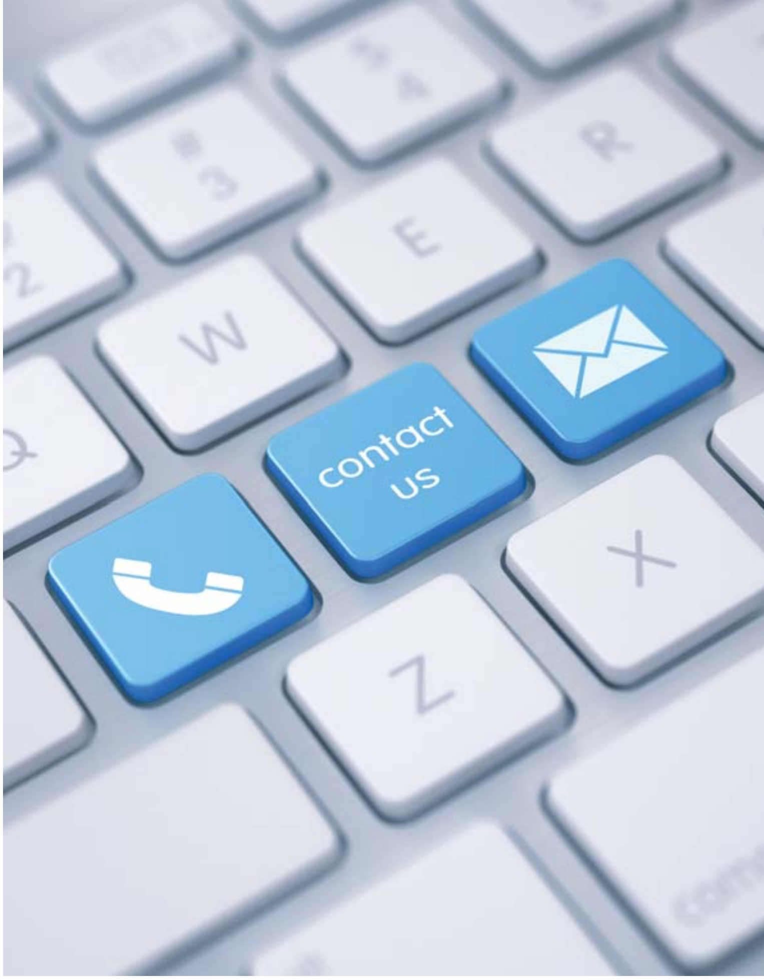
brand research

When they want, how they want

How are companies faring at answering social media-based customer queries?

| By Marianne Hynd



snapshot

Results of an ongoing study show that companies are making progress in trying to meet consumers' demands for customer service via social media.

Consumers have been driving social media as a customer service channel for many years, with high expectations as far as response rate and time, which has left brands feeling the pressure to acclimate to this new normal. While this has been generally successful, will consumers continue to dictate the rules of engagement or will brands get to a point where they take control again? This article draws from a study that sought to uncover insights into the current state of affairs and give some clues to what comes next.

Ann Michaels & Associates initiated the study focused on customer service in social media in 2012 as the phenomenon started to emerge. The study was replicated in 2015 and vast improvements were noted. It was clear that brands realized that the consumer was driving this need and it was only going to become more significant and they responded in a positive manner. By 2017, great strides had been made but just how far had brands advanced in their handling of customer feedback submitted via social media?

The 2017 study sought to answer this question. In addition to evaluating response rates and response times across social channel and time of day, the study also looked to identify any potential gaps in social service and uncover any potential opportunities to further enhance the customer experience online.

Ten companies within three verticals within the retail industry – specialty retail apparel, department stores and drug/grocery stores – were selected for inclusion in the study. The three industries were chosen as they represent a nice subset of the retail industry as a whole and obtaining data from different verticals within the same industry would provide a solid overview of performance.

The study focused on two of the largest social media networks, Facebook and Twitter, as well as more traditional contact via e-mail through a company's Web site. The e-mail response time, while not social-focused, can be used as a control group in some respects, as it was a significant customer service channel prior to the advent of social media.

Mystery shoppers were utilized to contact target companies with a simple inquiry related

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to their business. Days and times of contact varied to gain additional information regarding response time across a variety of time parameters throughout the day. Each retailer was contacted across each channel three times (once in each designated time period). In total there were 270 contacts made, as well as an additional three contacts per brand indirectly on Twitter – when a customer service inquiry was posted on Twitter, the mystery shopper did not post the inquiry directly on the retailer's Twitter page, send a direct message or use the @ symbol before the company's name to alert it to a new notification. This indirect piece was included as a secondary evaluation to determine if brands were actively monitoring conversations and reacting to issues when customers are not talking directly to them.

Results were aggregated by retailer and industry and the results were analyzed across all retailers included in the study, with a comparison made to data from prior studies.

Companies responded

When looking at response rates across all companies in the study, regardless of industry, results show that a response to a customer service inquiry was received 77 percent of the time, meaning that no matter which type of contact was made, companies responded to consumer inquiries 77 percent of the time.

Interestingly, overall response rate across all channels was down 2 percent since the 2015 study but still up from the initial response rate in 2012, which was 70 percent.

Time of day was incorporated into the study, with evaluations being conducted within three timeframes – weekdays between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m., weeknights between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. and weekends.

What's very interesting about the current findings is the consistency across all times of day; response rates were steadily around 77-78 percent, with some improvement in weeknight and weekend response rates. Weekdays actually showed a decline this time around, which may signal a focus on non-traditional times and continual realignment of service staff to offer consistent service levels no matter the social channel or time of day.

Consistently decreased

The data for speed of response paint a positive picture: response times have consistently decreased, dropping approximately 50 percent since the 2012 study and quite a bit since the 2015 study. During the 2012 study, Facebook was more predominantly used by brands compared to Twitter and it made sense that the response time was slightly better. During the next study, in 2015, Twitter tended to dominate slightly and the response time decline illustrated a response to this shift. Facebook responses were received in just under 8-1/2 hours on average in 2015, compared to the 7-1/2-hour average response time in this study. Response times decreased on Twitter between 2015 and 2017 (8 hours, 15 minutes hours vs. 6 hours, 30 minutes) as well.

Data was broken out into response times based on whether an inquiry was made during traditional business hours, weeknights or weekends to evaluate company response to the consumer-driven expectation of getting a reply as quickly during business hours as on weekends or weeknights. From there, the results focused on response times by time of day for Facebook and Twitter.

Facebook is generally the stronger of the two channels when it comes to response times; brands tended to respond within a 2-1/2-hour period during weekday hours, which almost matches consumer expectations. The site performed better than Twitter during weekend hours, though response times increased from prior studies. Facebook showed a significant lag in response time during weeknight hours, while this is a much stronger area for Twitter. Weekday response times continues to dominate, following the traditional thought that business hours are the most opportune time for consumers to get assistance quickly. It still goes against the fact that consumers are likely to be most active during non-business hours, after their workday and on weekends. This shows that brands may still be struggling with social media engagement during non-business hours.

Set a brand apart

To stand out in an extremely competitive landscape, a company must quickly identify a potential micro shift whenever a major shift occurs. This little shift can make a huge difference and set a brand apart from others very quickly. One such shift was identified in this study.

A small segment of contacts, which were not included in data analysis, were indirect customer service contacts on Twitter. One example was a simple Tweet that read, "Does anyone know if Retailer X sells petite sizes?" The consumer named the brand (and may or may not have used a hashtag) and posed a question but did not tweet directly to the company.

Contacts were made in this manner to identify if brands were monitoring social conversation outside of their own sites and, if so, were they responding or interacting with these indirect customers?

Expectations were extremely low in 2012 and results were as expected. In fact, the response rate was so poor that the results were not included in any way. In the 2015 study, results were slightly improved but still quite poor (less than 5 percent response rate).

In the years after the 2015 study, social media monitoring emerged, mainly as a means of tracking brand reputation and consumer satisfaction. Did this make an impact on the 2017 results?

Sort of. Only 14 percent of those communicating indirectly with a brand received a response. But it was interesting that the hashtag made a significant difference: 100 percent of those who received a response from indirect contact used a hashtag prior to the brand's name.

What does this tell us? The brands that were able to identify a customer service issue and reply to these indirect contacts were, at the very least, monitoring their hashtag for opportunities to respond to and assist consumers. What's even more promising is that, on average, the response time to these indirect inquiries was 38 minutes. This is very much in line with consumer expectations and far less time than averages found across other communication channels in this study.

Facebook has closed the gap

The results from this study support the research that has been done previously with regard to social media, though some assumptions made in 2015 did not fare as anticipated in the current study. Specifically, it was theorized that Twitter would continue to make strong strides in response times but data showed that Facebook has closed the gap on customer expectations more so than Twitter in both response rates and response times. While this data departs from the earlier theory, it does fall in line with Sprout Social's Q1 2017 index, which stated that, despite the fact that 47 percent of marketers believe Twitter is the preferred site for consumer engagement, Facebook is in fact the preferred site across Millennials, Baby Boomers and Gen Xers.

Another interesting finding was that, while response times continued to decrease in 2017, the drop was not as significant as it was in prior years. In fact, it appears that response times may be flattening; the gap was still quite wide between consumer expectations and actual response time and doesn't appear to be dropping significantly.

However, this finding gives clues into the future of social customer service. While the consumer has been driving the process up until now, these findings may suggest that brands are starting to take back control. There will come a point when response times are as good as they're going to get; the plateau may indicate that the current response times are the best brands can do and consumers may have to realize that they can be satisfied with a four-to-six-hour response time instead of the five-to-60-minute response they would like.

Truth is, companies are overwhelmed. Adding social to the mix as a vehicle for customer service has been challenging. The majority of companies have embraced social media but ROI is still difficult to prove and budgets may not focus on this need.

There also additional challenges, which may include:

- shifting the perception that there could exist social media staff and customer service staff, each in their own silo;
- mapping the customer journey in this medium with regard to service issues and tying social contacts to CRM platforms for seamless problem resolution; and
- ensuring that the right social monitoring platform is selected and utilized to its fullest extent to capture and handle issues across social conversations.

Difficult to meet

For brands, customer expectations have become more difficult to meet over the last several years. The consumer is definitely in the driver's seat and brands have been forced to acclimate to this reality. However, it appears that most companies are realizing the need to be flexible and adjust strategies as the consumer demands. What is important today may be long forgotten in six months or a year but it's clear that social media as a form of customer service communication will remain a crucial for many years to come.

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The story behind the story

Qualitative research in polarized times

| By Chris Jackson, Karin O'Neill and Liza Walworth

snapshot

The authors cite examples from recent projects to illustrate the value of considering multiple perspectives when talking to consumers.

As anyone who has ever read the online comment section of a newspaper story knows, even the most innocuous subject can quickly turn political and from there turn ugly. That is true now more than ever in our deeply conflicted times.

Where is this polarization coming from?

In simple terms, even though empirically humanity has never been safer, healthier and more prosperous than it is today, we often don't feel that way on a personal level. Our research has also shown a significant decrease of trust in public and private institutions.

Americans therefore seek areas where there isn't as much conflict. We relate to like-minded groups, whether you call them tribes or identity politics. This trend is particularly clear in research and marketing. People respond differently to questions and stimuli than in the past, making assumptions and interpreting ideas in ways other than we intend or expect.

It appears that Americans are filtering whatever crosses their paths – including ideas and people – and categorizing them as to whether they are for them or against them, victim or aggressor. They are making snap determinations about how to respond, whether to agree, fight or flee. People have difficulty empathizing with the other side, walking in their shoes and often do not have the emotional energy to give anyone the benefit of the doubt.

Because the population is so quick to divide, a brand that takes a stand or is even perceived to be taking a stand risks alienating a significant chunk of its consumer base. So, how can we as researchers guide brands and companies to survive and even thrive in this polarized and politicized environment? We offer a few simple principles. But first an example that shows how tricky these situations can be. Brands, too, can rush to judgement and make snap determinations. That can lead to targeting messages based on the anticipated tribal reactions of their customers.

The problem is, people are complicated.

In one case, Ipsos worked with a client that wanted to show its support for women's

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empowerment. The team and agency felt personally moved to align themselves with this issue and on paper it made sense for their consumer. They had data and trend information that told them that women's empowerment was a hot topic and that their target consumer was on board. One could even argue, from its history and brand position, that it had the right to talk about women's empowerment. Sounds great, right?

We took the creative into groups and showed women in the demographic target a storyboard of the proposed execution, filled with what the client and agency felt were inspiring stories about women. The reaction was indeed immediate and impassioned, just not the way the brand team envisioned.

Rather than feel like the brand understood them and their values, they felt the brand was trying to exploit women for commercial advantage. One person even questioned whether the brand was trying to say that a woman needed these products to succeed in a man's world. That was far from the brand's intent but it was how the campaign was interpreted. This research averted a brand blunder.

Needed to get deeper

In that example, it was true that women's empowerment was important to the target audience. The campaign made sense at a surface level; however, to execute it successfully, the client needed to get deeper into people's values and associations. The explosion in big data has heightened the trap of mistaking a wealth of data for insight. Reducing consumers, patients or customers to data points is often a problem that results in shallow understanding. The brand needed to understand how this issue related to women in their daily lives, how they felt about coverage of the issue and how they viewed brands that took a stand.

So, how do you gain this deep understanding of your target consumers? The simplest way is to meet them where they are and listen to their stories. Observe what is in the home, who is important to them, how they spend their time, where their pain points are and the things they do that they do not want to tell you about. Ethnography and immersive interviews are excellent methods to gain this deep understanding.

Exposed to pressures

As researchers, we know that respondents are very sensitive to question wording and the values implicit in words. This is particularly true when researching sensitive issues – like anything adjacent to politics. Sensitive issues are particularly exposed to social or cultural pressures resulting in either defensiveness or evasion on the part of the respondent. Researchers learn to approach these issues from different angles through topics that are easier to discuss.

In a recent ethnography study of middle-class moms in the Cincinnati area, we found that they were isolated into politically homogenous groups. A client that sought to bridge partisan divides might respond by trying to expose them to diverse viewpoints. We might have asked them how often they interact with people whose views differ from theirs and how those interactions make them feel. We know, however, that people can feel pressure to answer questions like these in ways they think will be viewed as socially acceptable – so they might tell us that they feel fine about it or that they enjoy a stimulating debate.

Upon spending time with these women, we learned that they had, in fact, interacted with different people but felt like the hostile or challenging political arguments were increasingly infiltrating their conversations in venues ranging from Facebook to book club. These interactions bothered them so much that they retreated to like-minded groups.

In this example, we would have no way of knowing of this pattern of behavior had we not been deeply immersed in their lives. Now that we do know this, we can ask a more specific question that might get a more accurate answer about how this sense of alienation and powerlessness impacts their lives or how people can talk about controversial topics in ways that feel safe. This insight – that tribal political behavior is the result of stress and a sense of loss – suggests a much different action than thinking people just do not take the time to talk to each other enough.

Too close to the idea

Reactions to stimulus in polarized times can be unpredictable, too, as in our women's empowerment example. Working teams are often too close to the idea to see these reactions coming. If you know everything there is to know about your brand, if you are briefed on its strategy or the strategy for an execution, if you work for its company or an agency that works for its company, you are probably too close to evaluate the idea objectively. You are also likely not a good representation of your target consumer. Consumers will bring their own knowledge and their own opinions to the conversation. They will interpret creative through the lens of their own experience in ways that can be hard to anticipate.

The solution to this problem is simple: iterative consumer learning. With any project, it is important to understand how consumers will perceive the execution not just the idea. This is particularly helpful when people seem to have hair-trigger reactions that can be set off by the smallest detail, like a word or image. Don't assume that just because the idea makes sense on paper the execution makes sense to the consumer. Don't assume that the storyboard has been translated into copy in a way that resonates equally well. Don't assume that your product name will be interpreted the way you think. Don't assume respondents will emotionally relate to the key visual, or even interpret it, the same way you do. Each piece of an execution has meaning to consumers and teams often underestimate the magnitude of impact of a seemingly small component.

Can fall short

The more difficult the question, the more important it is to triangulate it using multiple data points. In the case of polarization, it is particularly important not to be overly reliant on a single source. Why? When the research question is complicated and layered in identity or values, it is easy to overlook important nuance in the design. Survey data is an excellent way to capture population sizes and establish finite measures. But it can fall short of qualitative investigation when it comes to understanding why people feel a certain way. In these cases, the researcher is more likely to uncover the true issues if looking across multiple pieces of research for common themes and discrepancies.

In planning research and learning in polarized times, it is easy to take the same approach we saw with our Cincinnati respondents – to retreat from the controversy and stick to safer research topics. We have all seen enough recent missteps in the marketplace to know that this is not a good idea. Instead, address the questions with a thoughtful approach: allow for deep understanding of people; ensure careful research design; iterate propositions with consumer input; and triangulate important questions with multiple sources.

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Founded 1989 | 10 employees
Mark Chudnoff, CEO

Chudnoff Associates Inc. is a full-service marketing research company that has been dedicated to providing high-quality research and excellence in client satisfaction for almost 30 years. We are known as the "creative problem solvers." Recognized for our award-winning partnership that demonstrates a strategic point of difference in the areas of quality, service, innovation and value. We offer a nationally representative central location sensory testing option with full test kitchen. Our in-house bank of tablets allow for in-person interviews anywhere and our new geofencing solution allows for sensory evaluations on-site (in-restaurant) with no impact on operations.

Phone 732-863-1100
www.chudnoff.com

Covance Food Solutions

Founded 1982 | 100 employees
Nancy Eicher, Vice President and General Manager of Product Design

Covance Food Solutions, the result of the new combination of National Food Lab and Food Perspectives, provides consumer and sensory research as well as consulting services to help our clients develop products consumers love. Our research solutions integrate the three essential aspects of successful new products: consumer needs; concept positioning; and product design. Services include: discovery of idea drivers through early concept and prototype exploration; product optimization through consumer guidance and trained panel evaluation; and validation of launch readiness through national confirmation testing. We offer national mail fulfillment IHUT and central location testing. Our state-of-the-art facilities in Minneapolis and San Francisco collectively feature three commercial kitchens, three focus group rooms, large flexible CLT rooms and walk-in refrigerators and freezers.

Phone 763-553-7787
www.foodperspectives.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. CCR has the capability and location space to conduct studies with up to 200 respondents. Our experience includes all aspects of taste tests and sensory as well as interactive research with automobiles, farm equipment, motorcycles, large appliance testing, cosmetic products, alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages and a variety of food products specifically focused to targeted ethnic groups, low-incidence usage, adults 55+ and children. CCR has partnered within a variety of industries including health care, automotive and consumer goods.

Phone 281-240-9646
www.ccrsurveys.com

Decision Analyst

Founded 1978 | 150 employees
Jerry W. Thomas, CEO

Decision Analyst is a global leader in IHUTs (in-home usage testing), product optimization and related analytics.
The firm executes projects with a focus on quality assurance standards, systems and processes. Its staff has evaluated over 1,600 products during the past four decades. Decision Analyst has its own consumer panels, product labeling, processing and shipping equipment and facilities to conduct IHUTs. Decision Analyst's IHUT system predicts consumer acceptance, determines the optimal set of ingredients or features and includes pricing optimization systems. In-home usage testing is an effective way to create better products, build brand share and boost profitability.

Phone 817-640-6166
www.decisionanalyst.com/services/producttesting/

Focus & Testing

Founded 1995 | 35 employees
Spence Bilkiss, CEO

Focus & Testing, an Insights Center Facility, has skillfully executed food and beverage research through CLTs and focus groups for over 22 years. Since our inception, sensory testing has been our focus, allowing us to emerge as the prominent sensory center in Los Angeles. The 12,500-square-foot facility features the ultimate commercial-grade kitchen for everything from CPG to restaurant menu testing and anything in between. The facility also includes a residential kitchen, observable CLT suite with 44 respondent stations and three focus group suites. Our tenured and ServSafe-certified team sets us apart, enabling Focus & Testing to execute projects like a well-oiled machine.

Phone 818-347-7077
www.focusandtesting.com

HCD Research

Founded 1993 | 26 employees
Dr. Michelle Niedziela, Scientific Director/V.P. Innovation

HCD Research® is a full-service marketing and consumer sciences research provider using a combination of neuroscientific, psychological and traditional market research methodologies to better understand consumer behavior and nonconscious/emotional interactions with consumer products. The high failure rate of new market introductions begs the development of new approaches and methodologies for more insightful consumer understanding. Our team of experienced neuroscience and sensory researchers (led by Dr. Michelle Niedziela) can help you gain insight into consumer perception and provide useful information to make decisions for product development, packaging design and communications, marketing and claim development. Visit our Web site for more information: www.hcdi.net

Phone 908-788-9393
hcdi.net

Herron Associates Inc.

Founded 1958 | 45 employees
Sue McAdams, CEO

Leading sensory clients choose Herron for reliability backed by years of experience, stellar reputation and ease of execution. Herron maintains elite owner-operated facilities in Indianapolis and Tampa in addition to seamless project management utilizing proven partners across the U.S. We partnered with leading culinary teams to bring you kitchens designed by experts for the best culinary experience. Our spacious Indy facility offers a 960-square-foot commercial kitchen including 21’ commercial hood, gas quick connects, three phase power, walk-in cooler and freezer and a truck-level loading dock. Our Tampa office offers a large kitchen with upgraded power and ample work surfaces. Partner with Herron on your next project for a fresh perspective and see why clients make Herron one of their first calls when looking for an enhanced experience in the field.

Phone 800-392-3828
www.herron-research.com

INGATHER Research & Sensory®

Founded 2001 | 25 employees
Christine Cook, PRC

INGATHER Research & Sensory® is The Leader in Marketing Research and Sensory In-Context. Providing both traditional and alternative qualitative and quantitative research, INGATHER’s Unsalted Cracker Lab™ includes a full commercial kitchen, bar and restaurant within the space. The Common Sensory™ is perfect for consumer (CPG research), housing full consumer testing capabilities. Both have break off rooms for peel off focus groups. INGATHER’s 12,000-square-foot facility was built by researchers/scientists to meet the evolving sensory needs of today and the innovative in-context needs of the future. Whether it’s cleaning products, fragrance, cosmetics, gaming, you name it; INGATHER can handle your sensory research testing needs.

Phone 303-988-6808
www.ingatherresearch.com

Insights Center LLC

Founded 2016 | 15 employees
Melissa Smith, Director

Denver's largest commercial kitchen includes walk-in refrigeration, ventilation, fryers and plenty of stainless prep space. Our sensory/CLT labs are capable of seating up to 50 at a time and our ServSafe® trained sensory personnel handle even the most complex studies with ease. With two additional focus rooms, the facility can host both qual and quant. Whether it's a sequential monadic, paired comparison or discrimination test, our clients know they can rely on the data we collect.

Phone 720-787-7630
www.insightscenters.com

Jackson Associates Research Inc.

Founded 1957 | 35 employees
Marisa L. Pope, CEO

With over 18,000 feet of research space across two locations in Atlanta, Jackson Associates' commercial kitchen, equipped with 142 cubic feet of walk-in refrigeration, 60' of stainless prep, 80 lb. fryers, warmers and holding cabinets, is the largest and most conveniently located in the city. Couple that with our viewable CLT labs and luxurious focus suites and it's easy to see why clients love our facilities. But it's our experience that sets us apart; our average manager has more than a decade in research, which means less work for our clients. Our database of almost 200,000 makes even the most challenging recruit achievable.

Phone 770-394-8700
www.jacksonassociates.com

Lucas Market Research

Founded 1967 | 15 employees
Suzanne Lucas Echelmeyer

Celebrating 50 years of market research excellence, our redesigned facility boasts amenities for the most discriminating client and is conveniently located 15 minutes from STL Lambert airport. Centrally located, our professional recruiting staff can deliver a diverse range of respondent demographics from the Metro-STL. Our 1,000-square-foot multipurpose room is designed to comfortably and securely accommodate 30 testing stations, each equipped with laptop and high-speed Internet. A fully-equipped test kitchen and tenured, fully-trained staff on product preparation protocol will deliver a seamless and cost-effective solution to ensure your project is a success.

Phone 314-344-0803
www.lucasresearch.net

Marketing Workshop

Founded 1972 | 20 employees
Cari Pirello, President

Marketing Workshop expertly supports product development efficiently and effectively with custom research. Our versatile, commercial kitchen-equipped consumer test facility is designed for innovation, concepting, development and refinement. Having conducted thousands of menu development and manufacturers' product studies, we're known for being creative and agile, delivering actionable insights and added value. This robust experience is evident in the strategic recommendations and consultation provided throughout the research process. By engaging our marketing sciences team early in the research design phase, we leverage the most advantageous analytics to deliver clear and reliable insights. Marketing Workshop is the food and beverage research expert.

Phone 770-449-6767
www.mwshop.com

The Martec Research Center

Founded 1984, Green Bay research center opened in 2003 | 35 employees
Linda Segersin, Director

The Martec Research Center, a Martec Group company, is in Green Bay, Wis. The research center offers a full range of marketing research services with emphasis on telephone research from our in-house call center and focus groups. The research center supports a vast array of industries, technologies and markets including automotive/transportation, health care/life sciences, building construction, financial services, energy and food and nutrition. Utilizing Martec's in-house database, which includes sensory-trained panel members, Martec conducts sensory testing and taste testing including blind studies and in-home testing. The Green Bay office features a consumer-based test kitchen, where our in-house chef not only prepares menus for focus groups but prepares and assists in judging recipes submitted in recipe contests.

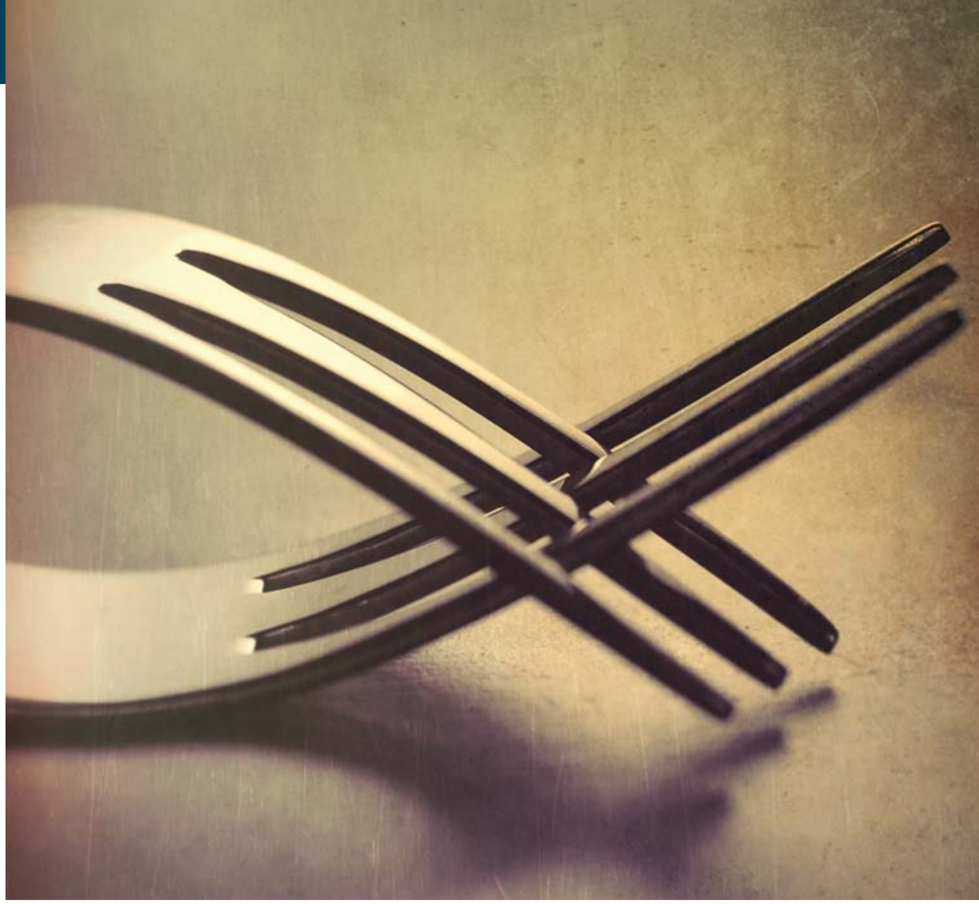
Phone 888-811-5755
www.martecresearchcenter.com

P&K Research

Founded 1957 | 250 employees
Richard Popper, Ph.D., CEO

Consumer product companies rely on us to deliver the data and insights needed to launch new products, evaluate existing markets and competitors and develop new formulas that may save money or grab an increased market share. We're an end-to-end research partner providing qualitative and quantitative research (CLT testing, IHUT testing and online research) through our company-owned facilities in Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York and Tampa and our field alliances across the U.S., Europe, Asia, Latin America and Australia. Our roots are in food and beverage but our category expertise includes restaurant, personal care, home care and OTC medicines. P&K Research: Helping Create the World's Best Products.

Phone 800-747-5522
www.pk-research.com



PVR Research Inc.

Founded 1965 | 54 employees
Valerie Cansler, CEO

Come experience the PVR difference and see what our clients are raving about! Our large commercial kitchen is ideal for QSR, fast casual dining and food/beverage testing. We have ample freezer and refrigerator storage and multiple electric/gas connections to configure any cooking equipment required. Our CLT room accommodates 40+ respondents. Our newly-added second kitchen is designed for plate and serve testing. Its adjoining CLT room seats 60+ testers. Our professional staff can provide any culinary support to help prepare and serve test products. Culinary research is one of our core competencies. We provide your desired level of project support so that you can make successful business decisions.

Phone 770-232-0322
www.pvr-research.com

Quick Test/Heakin

Founded 1967 | 400 employees
Christy Crossan, Vice President

What do you do when you need to push 200 respondents through a product taste test in a short time frame with a tight budget? Quick Test/Heakin, an industry leader for over 50 years, offers 22 mall locations nationally, specializing in taste tests. Being your trusted partner, Quick Test/Heakin can successfully execute studies with both minimal and rigorous product preparation, engaging either a small pool of respondents, large-sized samples or anything in between. We believe in partnerships. You lay the groundwork. We'll be the experts in delivering quality data on time and within budget. Teamwork at its finest.

Phone 800-523-1288
www.quicktest.com

Reckner Facilities

Founded 1991 | 225 employees
David Reckner, President

Celebrating 25+ years of market research excellence, Reckner provides state-of-the-art taste test and product testing facilities located in Milwaukee and New York City MSA. Spacious, fully-equipped test kitchens offer ample refrigeration and freezer space, dishwashers, ovens, abundant counter space and more. Highly-tenured staff are fully trained in food service and well-versed on the detailed protocols of product preparation and testing. Experience in all food and beverage categories including alcohol, confectionery, dairy, frozen foods and more. Focus group rooms, multipurpose space and product testing booths also available. Experienced with home-use tests, large quotas and complex designs, all with quick turnarounds and competitive pricing.

Phone 215-822-6220
www.recknerfacilities.com

RTi Research

Founded 1979 | 55 employees
David Rothstein, CEO

RTi helps turn insight into action. We are an innovative, global, full-service market research company and for more than three decades our clients have counted on us to connect the dots, tell the story and influence action. We are an AMA Gold Top 50 company and a Connecticut Top Workplace. Our talented, experienced and dedicated team has extraordinarily deep expertise, earned over decades of supporting successful brands. In RTi, you have a partner you can trust to navigate the many nuances of formulation screening, benchmarking, productivity and quality improvement, delivering the answers you need on time and on budget.

Phone 203-324-2420
www.rtiresearch.com

Schlesinger Group

Founded 1966 | 700 employees
Tim Sauer, SVP, Client Solutions

Our team is highly adept at planning and executing complex taste testing programs. We provide a range of food and drink testing solutions either in-facility or at central locations that provide the right footfall and appropriate facilities to suit your particular needs. We support your preferred approach, be it branded or blind paired comparison tests or your proprietary technique. Depending on your chosen location, we pre-recruit or intercept and pre-screen participants to deliver a representative sample of respondents to support either a qualitative or quantitative approach. Our test teams are trained in this technique and follow strict guidelines in preparation and presentation to avoid cross-contamination and neutrality. For alcohol testing, we ensure local laws and protocols are applied to ensure responsible tasting.

Phone 314-324-8094
SchlesingerGroup.com

Target Research Group

Founded 1986 | 30 employees
Greg Spagna, CEO

A privately-owned global market research company, Target Research Group is an industry leader in consumer and sensory testing for over 30 years. Endorsed: Dean of the Culinary Institute of America for “Target’s continued support of our Bachelor’s in Culinary Science students, enriching their education with the latest market and food product development research methodologies.” Research focus on, but not limited to, food and beverage, pet care, home health and beauty care, fragrance. Custom and strategic research, such as quantitative, qualitative, CLTs to HUTs, social media analysis, forecasting, concept testing, legal research and new innovative methods. Specialists in modelling, sensory, segmentation, panels, conjoint, package design. Protocols for kids, families and adults.

Phone 845-501-4064
www.TargetResearchGroup.com

TasteMakers Research Group

Founded 2010 | 5 employees
Andrea Poe, CEO

TasteMakers Research Group is a next-generation marketing research company founded in 2010 with the purpose of providing agile, affordable and rigorous consumer intelligence to clients. Our high-performance consumer product testing solutions are designed for product innovators, marketers and investors who require quick, quantitative and cost-effective results. TRG is a member of ASTM’s Sensory Ad Claims Standards Committee. TRG’s proprietary PopUp CLT™ (central location test) methodology reaches hundreds of on-the-go consumers effortlessly and seamlessly during the course of their daily lives to achieve real-time quantitative and qualitative results. Participants remain highly engaged with a dropout rate of less than 5 percent and an 80 percent completion rate of open-ended questions.

Phone 323-533-5954
www.tastemakersresearch.com

Names of Note

■ Nuremberg, Germany, research company *GfK* has appointed **Christian Erlandson** as chief customer officer, filling the last position of its executive leadership team. Erlandson takes over the position from CEO **Peter Feld** and will be responsible for sales and business activities across all regions.

■ Honeoye Falls, N.Y., consulting firm *KJT Group* has appointed **Rick Johnson** as vice president, consulting services.

■ Westport, Conn., researcher *Critical Mix* has appointed **Margit Kittridge** as vice president, digital products, a newly-created role.


Kittridge

■ U.K. mobile survey software firm *OnePoint Global* has appointed **Collette Taylor** and **Sian Bentley-Magee** as marketing managers and **Mark Procter** as head of global operations.

■ Emeryville, Calif., strategic consultancy *Greenberg Strategy* has appointed **Praveen Sharma** as senior director, marketing science and analytics.

■ U.K. video insights firm *LivingLens* has added **Leonard Murphy** and **Gregg Archibald** to its advisory board. Murphy is executive editor and producer at GreenBook and serves as an advisor to other MR businesses. Archibald is a researcher and strategist who has worked with Fortune 500 companies and advertising agencies.

www.quirks.comarticles/2018/20180213.aspx

■ Westlake Village, Calif., online sample marketplace *PureSpectrum* has appointed **Mark Menig** as chief operating officer.


Menig

■ **Carmen Bekker** has joined professional services firm *KPMG Australia* as a partner to lead its specialist CMO advisory team.

■ In London, marketing agency *Merkle* has appointed **Michael Komasinski** as president of EMEA.

■ **Anne Brown** has joined Colorado Springs, Colo., research firm *Elevated Insights* as senior qualitative strategist.


Brown

■ Singapore-based audience data firm *Eyeota* has added **Andrew Tu** as managing director, Asia-Pacific. Tu succeeds Eyeota Co-founder **Trent Lloyd**, who moves into the role of EVP global publisher strategy and products. Additionally, **Peter Hunter** has been appointed as general manager, ANZ.

■ *RTi Research Inc.*, based in Norwalk, Conn., has added **Alan Baruch** as a vice president on the financial services team.

■ Research company *Burke, Inc.*, Cincinnati, has promoted **Xavier Quenaudon** to senior vice president, client services.

■ Research agency *MetrixLab* has appointed **Nick Langeveld** as president of its U.S. business, a newly-created position. He will be based in the MetrixLab office in Norwalk, Conn. The company also recently appointed **Masahiro Shimizu** as executive officer and global chief financial officer.

■ Research technology company *ZappiStore* has appointed **Gabriel Velez** as regional director for Latin America, based in Miami.


Velez

■ **Joseph Prindle** has been named CTO of Los Angeles-based research and analytics firm *LRW* (Lieberman Research Worldwide).

■ Seattle-based researcher *Discuss.io* has hired **Frank Jellinek** as growth director for the U.K.

■ **Mara Kaufman** has joined research consultancy *Smarty Pants*, New York, as an insights brainiac.


Kaufman

■ Chicago-based research firm *Shapiro+Raj* has appointed **Robert A. Hart, Jr.** as senior vice president of research and analytics.

■ Research company *SoapBoxSample*, Los Angeles, has promoted **Mike Chavarria** to vice president of business development and **Valerie Hanson** to senior research director.

■ *Maritz Motivation Solutions*, St. Louis, has appointed **Cameron Conway** as vice president of the company's sales performance and channel loyalty practice.

■ Retail analytics firm *Wiser*, Boston, has hired **Mark Rudolph** as chief revenue officer.

■ Research firm *Leger* has appointed **Don Holmes** as senior vice president of sales in its Toronto office.


Holmes

■ Atlanta-based management consulting firm *Ascension* has added four new team members: **Wes Johnston** as strategic marketing + consultative sales enablement; **Michael Parker** as B2B marketing + sales growth platforms; **Madison Loveless** as research analyst/content marketing; and **Susan Avarde** as board of advisors - branding/customer experience/marketing strategy.

■ Wilton, Conn., researcher *Toluna* has appointed **Peter Shafer** to lead its North American digital solutions practice.

■ Marketing technology firm *Commerce Signals*, Charlotte, N.C., has added four to its executive leadership team: **Todd Lawson** as chief financial officer; **Nick Mangiapane** as chief marketing officer; **Chris Hammer** as executive vice president of product; and **Aimee Tumaneng** as vice president of sales.

■ Kearney, Neb., health science marketing firm *SCORR Marketing* has promoted the following team members: **April Roggasch** to chief financial officer; **Brook Pierce** to senior director of creative services and internal marketing; **Drake Sauer** to art director; **Carrie Whiting** to human resources director; **Steph Todd** to director of production and sourcing; **Kate Covalt** to senior program manager; **Tess Dugan** and **Kacia Hughett** to program manager and **Dallas Bacon** to executive assistant to the chief marketing officer.

■ *MFour Mobile Research*, Irvine, Calif., has hired **Raymond Tuason** as a graphic designer and **Allyson Wehn** as a research consultant.

■ New York-based research agency *Insight Strategy Group* has added two senior hires: **Ruth Ingram**, who will lead the lifestyle team as senior vice president, research and strategy; and **Michelle O'Neill** as vice president, client services.


Ingram


O'Neill

■ Canada-based customer engagement agency *Bond Brand Loyalty* is expanding its global presence to meet client needs and support growth in Europe and Latin America, promoting **Kyle Davies** to vice president, global insights.

■ In London, marketing agency *Merkle* has appointed **Julia Crawley-Boevey** as head of mergers and acquisitions for EMEA.

■ McLean, Va., hospitality company *Hilton* has appointed **Kellyn Smith Kenny** as senior vice president and chief marketing officer.

■ **Jonathan Sheldrake** has joined research firm *Opinions LTD* as sales director EMEA. He will be based in the U.K. and will cover all of Europe, the Middle East and Africa.

■ De Pere, Wis., firm *Legato Healthcare Marketing* has added **Patty Kitowski** as senior account manager.

■ Research company *The NPD Group* has appointed **Stanley Kee** as managing director for its APAC business. He will be based out of Singapore and will lead NPD's business in China, Japan, South Korea and Australia.

■ *Harris Insights & Analytics*, New York, has appointed the following to its leadership team: **Merrill Raman** as chief information officer; **Erica Parker**, who will lead Harris On Demand, the firm's relaunched omnibus business; and **Kenesha Brown** as vice president of sample acquisition and vendor management.

■ Marketing technology company *Mapp Digital*, based in San Diego, has appointed **Steve Warren** as its new CEO.

■ Greenwood Village, Colo., restaurant chain *Red Robin Gourmet Burgers Inc.* has promoted **Dana Benfield** to senior vice president and chief marketing officer.

Research Industry News

Acquisitions/transactions

■ The merger agreement between research companies **Research Now**, Plano, Texas, and **Survey Sampling International** (SSI), Shelton, Conn., has received all necessary global regulatory approvals and has closed. The combined company will be known as **Research Now SSI** and will be led by Research Now CEO Gary Laben as CEO.

■ Belgium-based researcher **InSites Consulting** has acquired Sydney-based research agency **Direction First** to develop a position in the Australian market. The companies have been collaborating since 2011. Erica Van Lieven, founder of Direction First, will be managing director of the Australian office and will also become managing partner of the combined company.

■ **Quirk's Media**, Eagan, Minn., has acquired the assets of research industry publication **SURVEY Magazine**, which will become a sponsored content companion to *Quirk's* magazine. SURVEY Magazine will publish three issues in 2018.

■ Chicago-based social media management firm **Sprout Social** has acquired Seattle-based social analytics firm **Simply Measured**.

■ Sports measurement and insights firm **Nielsen Sports** has acquired **Repucom Africa**, operated by sports marketing and communications firm TransAfrica Media. Repucom Africa was a licensee of Nielsen Sports and has been trading as Nielsen Sports South Africa. Kelvin Watt has been appointed as regional managing director of Nielsen Sports in Africa and the Middle East.

■ Newtown Square, Pa., firm **Research America Inc.** has acquired Pleasant Hill, Calif., research firm **Sentenium Inc.**, adding to Research America's operations in California. The acquisition also marks Research America's first offshore expansion, as Sentenium's operations include an office in Zhongshan, China.

■ Fairfax, Va., consulting services company **ICF** will acquire London-based loyalty strategy and marketing company **The Future Customer Limited**, which will operate as part of ICF Olson's 1-to-1 loyalty practice. Financial terms were not disclosed.

■ San Jose, Calif., e-commerce company **eBay** has signed an agreement to acquire Toronto-based e-commerce research company **Terapeak**. Financial terms were not disclosed. Upon the close of the transaction, eBay will begin integrating functionality from Terapeak into its Seller Hub. Terapeak's employees will continue to be based in Toronto and Victoria, B.C.

■ **PBIRG** (Pharmaceutical Business Intelligence & Research Group) and **PMRG** (Pharmaceutical Marketing Research Group) merged in January to form **Intellus Worldwide**, an association for health care insights and analytics. Stephanie Reynders, PMRG's executive director, will serve as chief operating officer and Carol Reilly, PBIRG's executive director, will serve as chief financial officer.

Alliances/strategic partnerships

■ Stockholm-based software company **Cint** has formed a partnership with Sydney-based data exchange technology platform **Data Republic**. The partnership will give Data Republic participants access to Cint's audience of consumers and allow them to incorporate multiple sources of data to better understand their customers and gather insights.

■ In Miami, media company **Telemundo** has formed a partnership with researcher **Maru/Matchbox** to create a combined insight community of U.S. Hispanics that includes variables like country of origin, language in the household and acculturation level. MiTelemundo, Telemundo's online insight community of mostly Spanish-dominant Hispanics, will combine with Maru/Matchbox's Springboard America panel of English-dominant Hispanics.

■ Plano, Texas, firm **Research Now** and Tokyo-based research data firm **Rakuten AIP** have formed a strategic alliance, providing mutual access to each other's panel data and the development of digital research products and services. The partnership will expand the reach of each company's database of consumers for country-market and multi-country surveys. Clients can access data and buy sample from Research Now's consumer and business panelists and Rakuten AIP's panel and data assets.

■ Plano, Texas, firm **Research Now** has formed a data partnership with customer intelligence platform **FullContact**. The partnership allows marketers and researchers to expand consumer views to gain new insights, such as understanding life cycles based on demographic, social lifestyle and brand engagement, to optimize marketing strategies.

■ Research software companies **Tremayne Consulting Group**, based in Melbourne, Australia, and **Nebu**, based in the Netherlands, have joined forces to provide data collection and analysis software, dialer solutions,

www.quirks.com/articles/2018/20180214.aspx

consulting and local support in the Australia and Southeast Asia regions.

■ New York-based data and technology companies **PlaceIQ** and **1010data** have formed a partnership. The 1010data Insights Platform will host PlaceIQ's LandMark data set to deliver consumer location intelligence across the U.S.

■ Research companies **Aimpoint Research**, based in Columbus, Ohio, and **Dialogica**, based in Milan, have formed a strategic partnership. The companies have merged multiple proprietary approaches to create a video analytics offering and customer experience optimization platform that tracks, measures, analyzes and segments shopper buying behaviors across traditional retail outlets, OOH advertising, experiences and events.

Association/organization news

■ **The Insights Association**, Washington, D.C., has recruited 21 American business groups to send a letter to Congress, supporting the funding request from the Secretary of Commerce for an additional $187 million for the 2020 Census in fiscal year 2018.

■ **The QRCA**, St. Paul, Minn., has announced the winners of the Global Outreach Scholarships for 2018. The scholarship program aims to involve more qualitative researchers from outside the U.S., Canada and the U.K. in opportunities to learn and grow outside their home regions. The winners include Mpho Mpofu, director of Masutane Consulting, from Johannesburg, South Africa; and Monica Dale form São Paulo, Brazil.

■ **The QRCA**, St. Paul, Minn., has announced the winners of the 2018 Young Professionals Grant program: Philippe Boutros, Cascade Insights; Warren Ciabattoni, 7th Sense Research; Elizabeth Dengal, Fulcrum Research Group; Aimée Douglas, Bain & Company; Jessica Fennell, Northstar Research Partners; Reece Jones, Buzzback; Anne Lee Groves, Lee Groves Consulting; Marlena Mattei, KUDZU Research & Insights; Amye Parker, Northstar Research Partners; Jeanne Penn, Cello Health Insight; Meagan Peters, Solution Partners Consulting; Angel Requena, InsightsNow; Andrew Russell, Sylver Consulting; Rebecca Bukele Samour, Collage Group; Brittany L. Stalsburg, BLS Research & Consulting; and Leigh Wright, Bad Babysitter Productions.

■ **The Marketing Research Education Foundation** (MREF) has donated over $13,000 to the Joseph School in Haiti to support the class of 2029. The MREF hopes to make this donation annually.

Awards/rankings

■ **Research America Inc.** has been named a top Cincinnati market research firm by the Cincinnati Business Courier.

■ **Galileo Research & Strategy Consultancy**, New York, has received a Gold Stevie Award for Women Owned Company of the Year for 2017, as well as the Silver Stevie Award for Most Innovative Women Owned Company in the Stevie Awards for Women in Business.

■ In Baltimore, focus group facility **Observation Baltimore** and the **Research Group** have been named one of Baltimore's fastest-growing companies by the Baltimore Business Journal.

New accounts/projects

■ Market strategy consultancy **iGR** has selected and implemented **Confirmit Horizons** from Oslo, Norway, research technology firm Confirmit to strengthen its end-to-end data collection and reporting capabilities.

New companies/new divisions/relocations/expansions

■ **Wolvereye**, a New York-based research company, has launched. The company uses a body of techniques used in psychology to gain insights, allowing researchers to react quickly to new information and alter the direction of a research study. The company also uses crowdsourced intelligence and artificial intelligence to understand the emotional DNA structure of brands, products, communications, etc. Ryan Baum will serve as the company's CEO.

■ **Market My Market**, a digital marketing company based out of New York and Fort Lauderdale, Fla., has expanded to Orlando, Fla. The company plans to extend its services to all-sized businesses in Central Florida.

■ **Communications for Research**, St. Louis, has expanded its call center operations by adding 40 booths to its Waynesville, Mo., location.

■ **Google**, Mountain View, Calif., has launched the AI China Center, which will focus on basic artificial intelligence research. The company says the center will include a team of AI researchers in Beijing, supported by Google China's engineering teams. Fei-Fei Li, chief scientist AI/ML, Google Cloud, will lead and coordinate the research along with Jia Li, head of research and development at Google Cloud AI.

■ **Truesight Consulting**, a marketing analytics and solutions company, has been launched by David Dixon and Sebastian Shapiro. The company includes a team of more than 25 marketing and analytics professionals and provides services and solutions like marketing mix modeling, multi-touch attribution, customer data analytics, quantitative survey analytics and marketing change management. The company is headquartered in New York City and has regional offices in Los Angeles, London and Delhi, India.

Research company earnings/financial news

■ U.K. video analytics firm **Voxpopme** has secured a seven-figure Series A investment over the next 12 months from Mercia Fund Managers. The company says it plans to use the investment to support its growth plans and enhance its video insight technology. The company also plans to recruit 15 additional staff members across North America, Europe and Asia-Pacific.

■ Measurement company **Verto Analytics**, San Francisco, has reported a 48 percent increase in month-to-month revenue since the beginning of Q1 2017.

■ **Study Hall Research**, Tampa, Fla., made a 2017 year-end contribution to Operation BBQ Relief, which provides meals to displaced residents and emergency personnel during natural and other disasters in the United States and territories.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

••• can't-miss activities

Merlien Institute will hold its Qual360 Europe event on **February 7-8** in **Berlin**. Visit eu.qual360.com.

The 2018 Pharma Market Research Conference USA event will be held on **February 14-15** in **Newark, N.J.** Visit bit.ly/1Sh6Yhi.

African Market Research Association will hold the Africa Forum 2018 event on **February 22-23** in **Nairobi, Kenya**. Visit africanmra.org/AMRAWeb.

AMA will hold its 2018 Winter Academic Conference on **February 23-25** at the Sheraton New Orleans in **New Orleans**. Visit www.ama.org.

Worldwide Business Research will hold the eTail West 2018 event on **February 26 - March 1** at the JW Marriott in **Palm Springs, Calif.** Visit bit.ly/2DR0wIV.

Quirk's will hold its 2018 Quirk's Event - East on **February 27-28** at the Marriott Brooklyn Bridge in **Brooklyn, N.Y.** Visit www.thequirksevent.com.

The 2018 Pharma CI European Conference and Exhibition will be held on **February 27-28** in **Lisbon, Portugal**. Visit bit.ly/2xSy2N7.

NMSBA will hold the Neuromarketing World Forum on **March 7-9** in **Singapore**. Visit bit.ly/P3Zi3Q.

Sawtooth Software will hold its 2018 conference on **March 7-9** in **Orlando, Fla.** Visit bit.ly/2CcAyiQ.

Merlien Institute will hold its Qual360 North America event on **March 21-22** in **Washington, D.C.** Visit na.qual360.com.

ARF will hold its CONSUMxSCIENCE 2018 event on **March 27-28** in **New York**. Visit bit.ly/2g99He3.

KNect365 (IIR) will hold its FUSE 2018 event on **April 9-11** at the Dream Hotel Downtown in **New York**. Visit bit.ly/2vpiqRB.

UTA MSMR Alumni Association will hold their annual insights conference for the industry on **April 12** in **Arlington, Texas**. Visit msmralumni.org.

ESOMAR will hold its Latin America 2018 event on **April 15-17** in **Buenos Aires, Argentina**. Visit www.esomar.org.

Merlien Institute will hold its MRMW North America event on **April 24-25** in **Cincinnati**. Visit na.mrmw.net.

PAA will hold its 2018 Annual Meeting on **April 26-28** at the Sheraton Denver Downtown in **Denver**. Visit bit.ly/2xgZ131.

Insights Association will hold its NEXT 2018 conference on **April 30 - May 1** in **New York**. Visit bit.ly/2kK4lLk.

ESOMAR will hold its Asia Pacific 2018 event on **May 13-15** in **Bangkok**. Visit www.esomar.org.

ASA will hold its Symposium on Data Science and Statistics on **May 16-19** at the Hyatt Regency Reston in **Reston, Va.** Visit bit.ly/2g8o1TW.

ESOMAR will hold its Semiotics Bootcamp on **May 16-17** in **Bangkok**. Visit www.esomar.org.

AQR and **QRCA** will hold the 2018 Worldwide Conference on Qualitative Research on **May 16-18** in **Valencia, Spain**. Visit www.qrca.org.

LIMRA will hold The Marketing Conference on **May 30 - June 1** at the Hyatt Regency Baltimore in **Baltimore**. Visit www.limra.com.

ESOMAR will hold its Summer Academy 2018 event on **June 4-7** in **Amsterdam**. Visit www.esomar.org.

NMSBA will hold its Shopper Brain Conference - USA event on **June 7-8** in **New York**. Visit bit.ly/2gGCVAZ.

MRIA will hold its 2018 Annual Conference on **June 10-12** in **Vancouver, British Columbia**. Visit bit.ly/2ygCoAp.

KNect365 (IIR) will hold its OmniShopper event on **June 13-15** at the Westin Chicago River North in **Chicago**. Visit bit.ly/2eI8KbF.

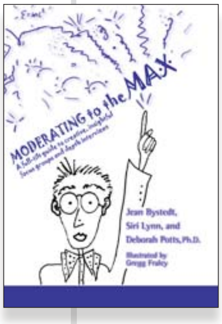
UXPA will hold its 2018 International Conference on **June 26-28** in **Rio Mar, Puerto Rico**. Visit uxpa2018.org.

EphMRA will hold its 2018 Conference on **June 26-28** at the Congress Centre in **Basel, Switzerland**. Visit www.ephmra.org.

NMSBA will hold its Shopper Brain Conference - South America event on **August 30-31** in **Rio de Janeiro**. Visit bit.ly/2j3FGR1.

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.

ESSENTIAL READING FOR RESEARCH PROFESSIONALS



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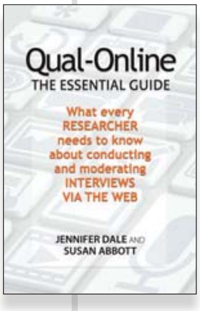

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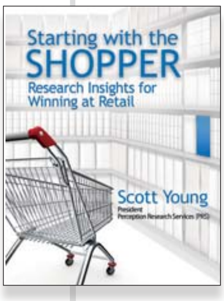

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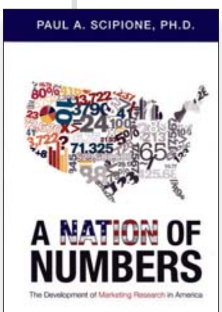

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Paul Scipione identifies the factors and events that came together to make America the birthplace of marketing research and documents how far the marketing research industry has come in its first 100 years, morphed from analog to digital, with new tools in big data and advanced analytics, observation of actual consumer behavior via scanning UPC codes, and advances in the neurosciences, and speculates where the industry will be in the future.

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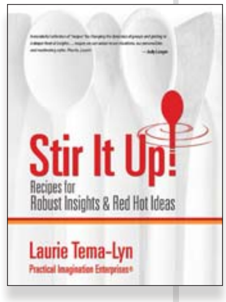

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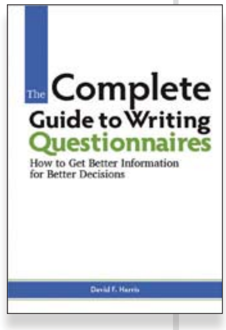

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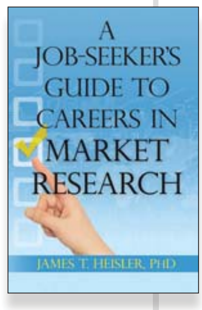

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10 minutes with...

Brooks Deaton
Senior Director, Consumer Insights, NASCAR

"With the scale of the community and ability to segment fans through their life journey in NASCAR, and in sports, we gain tremendous insight on how our fans live their lives through the sport."

What led you to a career in marketing research?

Curiosity and relationships. I think those are fundamental attributes of a marketing research professional. I started my career in the marketing department for a PGA Tour-run golf course developing programs to engage golfers where I met a member who had his own boutique research firm. I joined him and stayed on that side of the business for about five years, having the opportunity to work for some of the biggest brands and spanning most industries. I made the familiar jump to the client-side 10 years ago and have been able to work for some amazing brands.

Prior to joining the team at NASCAR you held positions on the vendor side as well as at Aflac and Denny's. Of all the market segments you've researched, is there one that seems more open to participating in the research process than others?

I've been fortunate to work in industries that have very committed – and opinionated – consumers. I think anyone can be open to sharing their thoughts with you if your work is positioned to them in a relevant manner.

Aflac is such an incredible company because it wants to be at its best when its consumers are in times of need. Our research had a large focus on making sure every touchpoint the consumer had with the business was the best representation of what the company believes in. When the company culture is committed to providing a dependable and positive experience, consumer feedback is critical.

Talk about your greatest achievement within marketing research to date.

It is hard to pinpoint one single greatest achievement as the brands I have worked for each believed in the role of consumer insights, but at NASCAR we have received awards for the Official NASCAR Fan Council we have with Vision Critical. The partnership allows us to talk with nearly 25,000 NASCAR fans on a regular basis utilizing numerous methodologies and bringing in third-party APIs to broaden the experience for the fans. With the scale of the community and ability to segment fans through their life journey in NASCAR, and in sports, we gain tremendous insight on how our fans live their lives through the sport.

What emerging technologies do you think will make the greatest impact to MR and consumer insights in the next five years?

Obviously, the world of AI and VR are starting to make a significant impact on the industry. I think the applications of these technologies will only advance and I wouldn't be surprised if it is the next industry shift in methodological approach a la online research 10-to-15 years ago.

Read the full interview at www.quirks.com/articles/2018/20180222.aspx.