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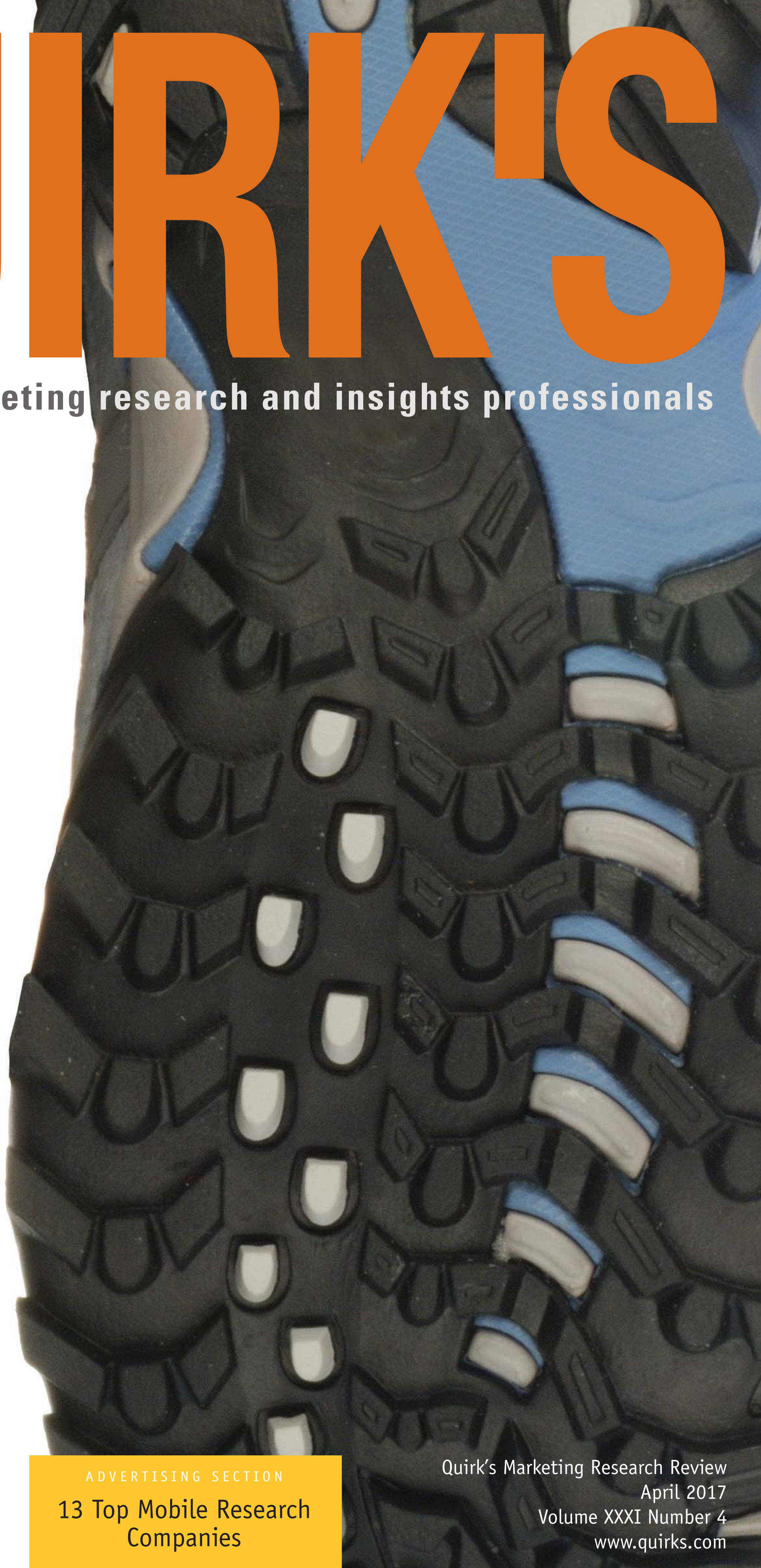
For marketing research and insights professionals



GETTING A GRIP

HOW THE YMCA USED JOURNEY-MAPPING TO BOOST MEMBER RETENTION

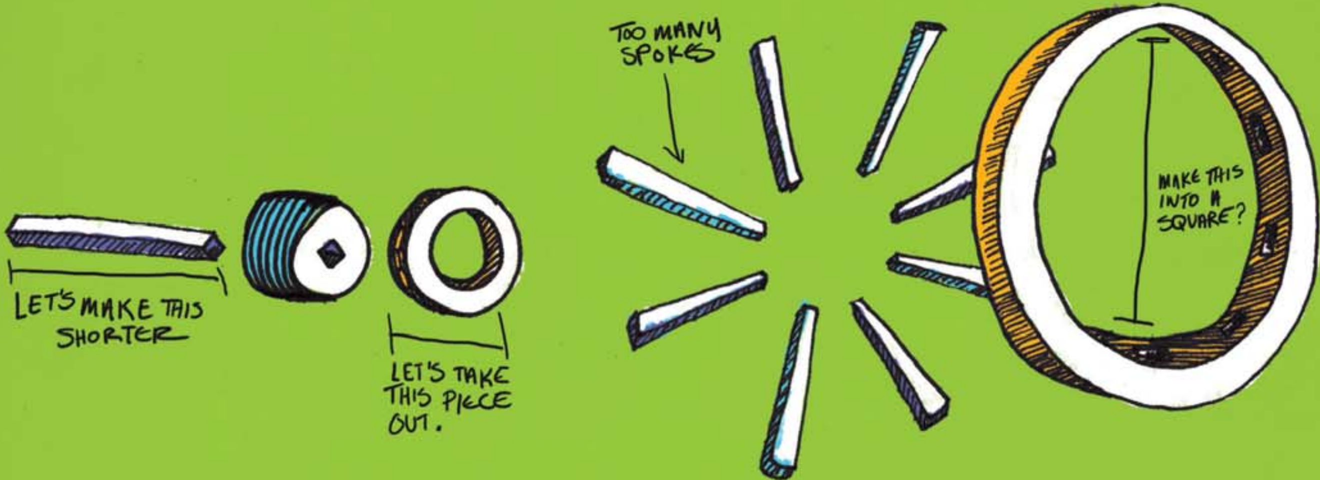
PLUS Strategies for optimizing B2B survey research

How to drive decisions with customer-choice insights

Why marketing should own pricing

Quirk's Marketing Research Review
April 2017
Volume XXXI Number 4
www.quirks.com

ACTUALLY, IT *IS* LIKE REINVENTING THE WHEEL



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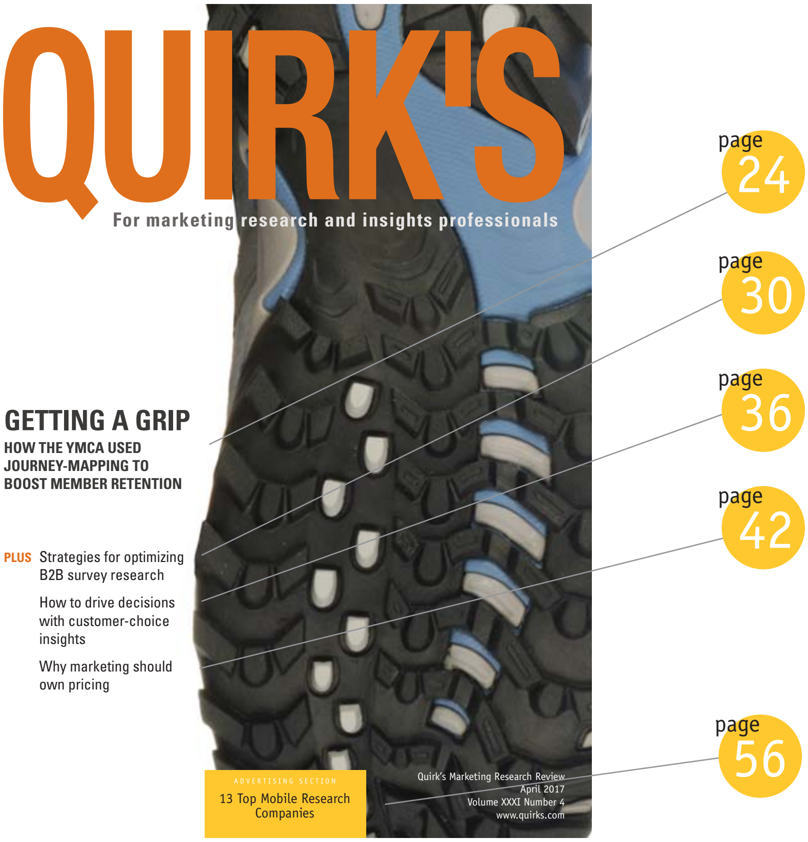

ON THE COVER

case study

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COLUMNS

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••• events

Looking to attend research events this year?

Quirk's works hard to provide you with the most complete list of marketing research-related events. While we highlight a number of events in each issue of Quirk's (pg. 66 in this issue), as well as in Quirk's twice-monthly e-newsletter. Our online event database is searchable by multiple criteria to help you find the event to meet your goals. Check it out at quirks.com/events!

// E-newsworthy

How research helped Columbus McKinnon redesign its ratchet lever
www.quirks.com/articles/2017/20170225-1.aspx

Trip to Haiti opened researchers' eyes
www.quirks.com/articles/2017/20170226-2.aspx

How Barnes & Noble College is cracking the code on Millennial and Gen Z needs
www.quirks.com/articles/2017/20170226-1.aspx

// Noted Posts

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Event spotlight: The Insight Show
https://goo.gl/glWLle

Study shows consumers plan to save tax refunds
https://goo.gl/QUJph3

It's time to prepare for the smart stores of the future
https://goo.gl/uVsspn

ResearchIndustryVoices.com

7 NPS boosters we hope you never use
https://goo.gl/19Rrbs

Seeing the customer on an individual level
https://goo.gl/QB9XQQ

Quick tip for maximizing POS survey response
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ResearchCareersBlog.com

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

What you can gain from a cross-mentoring group
https://goo.gl/t0Gvtg

••• automotive research

Most car owners have a trusted mechanic

According to a new AAA survey, while two out of three U.S. drivers do not trust auto repair shops in general, the majority (64 percent) of U.S. drivers have singled out an auto repair shop that they do trust, suggesting that consumers have prioritized finding a reliable mechanic in an industry with an imperfect reputation.

The top reasons that U.S. drivers do not trust repair shops are pretty much as expected: recommending unnecessary services (76 percent); overcharging for services (73 percent); negative past experiences (63 percent); and concerns that the work will not be done correctly (49 percent).

Older drivers are more likely to trust auto repair shops than younger drivers. Baby Boomers are twice as likely as younger generations to fully trust auto repair facilities in general, with one in five reporting they "totally trust" the industry. Baby Boomers (76 percent) are also more likely to have a chosen auto repair shop that they trust compared to Millennials (55 percent) and Gen Xers (56 percent).

With today's cars collecting a variety of data about the health of the vehicle, drivers need a trusted repair facility more than ever. Connected cars with built-in diagnostic capabilities can alert drivers to vehicle trouble and help repair shops quickly and accurately address issues. Unsurprisingly, given concerns around data security, AAA found that the majority of U.S. drivers want the ability to direct their vehicle's data to the repair shop of their choice – the trusted facility with whom they have built a relationship.

quirks.com/articles/2017/20170401.aspx

••• travel research

Travelers love their tech

Almost all travelers who own a smartphone rely on their devices to enhance their travel experience in several ways, according to an online survey of 600 participants conducted in August 2016 by Integrated Insights for the Consumer Technology Association (CTA). The study found that travelers use technology to provide easy access to information and directions, capture pictures and video and stay in touch with family and friends.

Survey respondents cited smartphones (64 percent), digital cameras (61 percent), tablets (27 percent) and laptops (17 percent) as the tech they use most on vacation. Additionally, almost half of respondents prefer a travel experience customized to their preferences and more consumers are willing to share personal information for travel providers to create a more customized experience.

Among the most valued travel-related experiences were time with family and friends (40 percent), experiencing new cultures (28 percent), visiting new places (22 percent) and adventurous activities (14 percent).

By Joseph Rydholm, Quirk's Editor

The day the lights went out in Irvine

©Clare Pix Photography www.clarepix.com

Joe Rydholm can be reached at joe@quirks.com

They say you learn a lot about a person's character during times of adversity. And while it's kind of a stretch to think of a power outage as an instance of adversity, when we lost electricity at the Hotel Irvine (Calif.) mid-morning on Day 2 of our first-ever West Coast Quirk's Event in March, I couldn't help but marvel at how most attendees and exhibitors shrugged off the situation and went right back to the business at hand.

The hotel did a great job of handling the outage, which affected a large area and apparently originated after a nearby transformer blew. Generators kicked in immediately so that the meeting rooms and exhibit spaces were at least dimly lit rather than in darkness. By early afternoon, the meeting rooms had auxiliary power to run PowerPoint decks but in the sessions that I attended, most presenters just spoke off the cuff and asked folks to bear with them. If anything, the dim light and no-tech vibe made the sessions seem a bit more informal and engaging, as speakers encouraged interaction and attendees happily asked questions.

I expected that some attendees might use the situation as an excuse to head out early and while we did see some evidence of that, I found the afternoon sessions to be just as busy as the previous day's.

There was grumbling from some quarters but most everyone involved seemed to understand that the outage, which lasted until after the event closed down, was beyond our control. Again, it helped that the hotel sprang into action almost without missing a beat and deployed staff in an army-like fashion. The sense of "the show must go on" camaraderie was palpable and many took to Twitter to keep the positive energy flowing:

Nice handling #QuirksEvent #mrx organizers, exhibitors and speakers despite an OC power outage!

Keeping Calm and Carrying On at #QuirksEvent. No power... No problem.

Have been loving seeing the #quirksevent updates from CA. Even during #lightsout, researchers shine (or glow?). Fave hashtag: #Qpocalypse2017

Would recommend the event

Preliminary results from our post-event survey have also been heartening: 97 percent of client-side attendees surveyed said they would recommend the event to a friend or colleague. Some sample comments:

"I had heard from several attendees at [another MR conference] that they really enjoyed the Brooklyn event. It was very convenient to have a West Coast location to attend and the registration pricing for corporate researchers made it a no-brainer."

"Really liked pretty much everything about it. I spoke about my experience very positively to my peers and leaders. I wrote a synopsis of key learnings that went over very well among the leadership team. I would definitely like to come back next year. Session lengths of 30 minutes were good. I also liked that this conference does not have a lot of pomp and circumstance ... no big-shot overrated keynote speaker or some boring main session 'panel discussion' (for me, 'panel discussion' equates to 'good time to go back to my room and do some e-mail' or 'hit the expo hall and collect some swag')."

"I thought the power outage was pretty cool." (Bless you, kind soul!)

Truly grateful

Along with the plaudits we also got a lot of constructive criticism – about the quality of the session topics, the layout of the exhibit hall and meeting rooms and the networking opportunities, etc. – all of which we plan to work on.

We'll be back in Irvine in 2018 and as we get ready, at the time of this writing in early March, to head to Brooklyn in a few weeks for The Quirk's Event East, it's gratifying to know that the worst can bring out researchers' best. To everyone who was there and who made the most of it, please know we are truly grateful!

quirks.com/articles/2017/20170402.aspx

ASK THE EXPERT

Expert answers to important research questions.

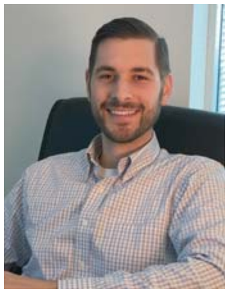
Helen Karchner
CEO/Co-Founder/Communications Professor/
Expert Moderator, KMR Research Studio
helen@kmrinsights.com
610-564-9624

Does the type of facility or studio selected impact my project's success?

That's an excellent question. Facility selection is often overshadowed by familiarity, price, preference, brand recognition and convenience to airports, hotels, restaurants, etc. However, your overarching quintessential focus should instead be on the respondents themselves. Contemplate the following considerations for your respondents:

- Convenient parking
- Venue with easy access
- Competitor encounter by happenstance
- Relaxing external setting
- Zen-like internal atmosphere
- Technology quality

Since the purpose of conducting research is to glean the opinions, thoughts, beliefs and ideas of respondents, shouldn't they be the major focus?



Kevin M. Kish, CISA, HITRUST
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What steps can an organization take to remain compliant with changing regulations?

Organizations must recognize the impact of a data breach or exposure. Our strategic objectives were designed to give clients high-quality information along with ongoing confidentiality, integrity and continued availability of our online-based research tools and platforms. To do this, M3 Global Research certified to both ISO 26362 and 27001 frameworks to achieve the best possible standards. These globally-recognized frameworks require continual improvement of our infrastructure combined with cross-industry-accepted controls to meet the highest security objectives. These frameworks are also key in managing evolving IT and regulatory landscapes, without which an organization could lack preparation to make necessary adaptations and run the risk for legal vulnerability and a damaged reputation.

Ruth Stanat
President
SIS International Research
212-505-6805
research@sisinternational.com

How can businesses adapt in today's fast-paced global economy?

SIS International uniquely integrates market research with market intelligence and strategy research, since our founding as Strategic Intelligence Systems (SIS) over 30 years ago. These solutions include market-sizing and opportunity, forecasting, pricing research, competitive intelligence, site location analysis, competitive benchmarking, go-to-market strategy, channel intelligence, M&A research and market-entry strategy.

When effectively integrated, robust MR and MI initiatives let executives avoid surprises, assess vulnerabilities, capture opportunities, anticipate future competitor actions and out-think the competition.

Combining our full-service fieldwork and data collection research capabilities with market intelligence and strategy research, SIS provides insight for agile, tactical decision-making.

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Want your firm to be featured as an expert? Contact sales@quirks.com for more information. www.quirks.com/articles/2017/20170455.aspx.

IN FOCUS

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

// Survey Monitor

••• hispanic research

Mobile coupon use up among Hispanic consumers

Discounts drive shopping decisions

The Coupon Intelligence Study, conducted by Ipsos on behalf of Livonia, Mich., marketing firm Valassis, found that 92 percent of Hispanic consumers use coupons (vs. 90 percent of all consumers) and over 80 percent decide where to shop based on those print and digital offers.

With the Selig Center for Economic Growth projecting that the U.S. Hispanic market will reach an annual buying power of $1.7 trillion in 2020, retailers and marketers have an opportunity to drive sales by engaging this demographic with coupons and offers, says the report.

Stemming from the survey of 1,000 consumers, 15 percent of whom were Hispanic, the research found a strong link between this demographic and mobile-device coupon usage. Among the Hispanic consumers surveyed: 37 percent increased their use of mobile devices for securing coupons and deals since last year, significantly higher than 28 percent of all respondents; 81 percent decide where to shop based on paperless discounts delivered via mobile devices, significantly higher than 66 percent of all respondents; 67 percent search for mobile discounts while shopping in-store, compared to 46 percent of all respondents; 67 percent switched brands due to mobile discounts while shopping in-store, compared to 50 percent of all respondents; 53 percent of Hispanic shoppers check social media in search of coupons, vs. 37 percent of all consumers; and 61 percent visit coupon Web sites, vs. 53 percent of all consumers.

With a propensity for using print and digital savings, among the Hispanic consumers surveyed, 85 percent find print coupons in the freestanding insert or mail before shopping; 75 percent print coupons from the Internet before heading to the store; and 63 percent make a purchase based on a mobile notification while in-store.

quirks.com/articles/2017/20170403.aspx

••• diversity research

Study finds pay gap for female, minority board members

Missing on key committees

While minorities and females are represented on boards of directors of many major corporations in the U.S., they often have fewer leadership

opportunities within those organizations. In a new study (Does Diversity Pay in the Boardroom?), University of Missouri and University of Delaware researchers found an average 3 to 9 percent gap in compensation.

"On average across all firms, minorities and females actually are paid more than the average board member," says Matthew Souther, assistant professor of finance in the Robert J. Trulaske, Sr. College of Business. "However, when those boards and leadership opportunities are scrutinized more closely, this higher pay is driven by minorities and females being more likely to serve on boards of higher-paying, more visible firms. Within these boards, they actually earn less on average than their peers."

In their study, Souther and co-authors Adam Yore, assistant professor of finance, and Laura Field, professor of finance at the University of Delaware, reviewed more than 1,800 companies and 70,000 board members and their compensation. The researchers measured how well directors monitored the CEO, the vote totals that directors received to retain their seats on the boards, and each director's qualifications that included education and professional experience.

The researchers found that minorities and females on boards of directors are more qualified when comparing education, experience and expertise. They also found that it's uncommon for minorities and females to chair or serve on important committees such as audit or compensation committees. Committee chairs or directors who serve on important committees typically are paid additional money for their service.

Yore said most boards have a set compensation schedule that is paid to board members, and because larger companies have a better focus on diversity, it is not unusual to find minorities on boards of major firms. However, only 7 percent of directors are minority and 12 percent are female and therefore underrepresented relative to the population; because many minorities and females are not chosen to chair committees or serve on "power" committees, they often receive less total pay compared to their peers.

"The pay gap is not huge, so we think this might be some type of subconscious effect," Yore says. "Yet, it is something that could impact a board because they could be missing a significant perspective by not having a minority or female on the board serving in a leadership role. We also found that the pay gap was larger for those who had served longer, which also is concerning as boards always want to attract and retain the best people."

The researchers suggest that, in order to ensure equity, boards review how they appoint members to certain committees and leadership roles and ensure that their appointment policies help provide a balanced perspective for their companies.

••• mobile research

Worldwide, many mobile phones are just for phoning

Voice calls, SMS

Almost half of mobile phone users worldwide still only use their devices to make voice calls and send SMS, according to consumer research by GSMA Intelligence. The new Global Mobile Engagement Index (GMEI) measures the level of engagement of mobile phone users across a wide array of use cases and services. The index is based on inputs from the 2016 GSMA Intelligence consumer survey, which surveyed mobile users across 56 global markets representing 80 percent of the world's population.

The GMEI classifies mobile user engagement into four tiers: Aficionados (the most engaged), Pragmatists, Networkers and Talkers (the least engaged). The research reveals that Talkers – those who only use their mobile phones to make voice calls and send SMS – accounted for 47 percent of adult mobile phone owners in 2016. However, this segment is forecast to shrink to 29 percent of the total by 2030 as users across the developing world become more engaged due to advances in mobile innovation, affordability and availability.

The GMEI calculates an engagement score for each of the 56 global markets covered in the consumer survey. The top 10 countries based on this score are:

Rank	Country	Score
1	South Korea	5.0
2	Qatar	5.0
3	USA	4.7
4	Saudi Arabia	4.6
5	Denmark	4.5
6	Finland	4.5
7	Australia	4.5
8	Spain	4.4
9	Sweden	4.4
10	Romania	4.3

The GMEI report offers a number of insights based on the latest research:

South Korea, Qatar and the U.S. were the three highest-scoring markets in terms of mobile engagement. Traditional SMS is still used more frequently than IP messaging in several mature markets, including France and the U.S. Millennials are not necessarily more engaged mobile users than older generations; in markets such as South Korea, more than a quarter of smartphone users are Baby Boomers (aged 51-69). There are some markets, such as Myanmar, where smartphone ownership is relatively high but user engagement is low, due to digital illiteracy and a lack of locally-relevant content. There are several African countries with high mobile user engagement in financial services; for instance, in Kenya and Tanzania, around four in every five adult mobile phone owners use their phones for mobile money services.

More than 70 percent of smartphone users globally watch free online videos on their phone (e.g., YouTube), and one in two smartphone users watch or replay live TV programs on their device. More than 70 percent of smartphone consumers use their device to research information about products and services but only one in two use it to order and purchase goods. And, there exists a gender gap in mobile Internet usage in several markets. In India, for example, female mobile phone owners are 43 percent less likely to use mobile Internet services than males.

••• advertising research

Ad agencies depend on data

Manage relationships, evaluate performance

More than 80 percent of advertisers currently use data to help them manage agency relationships and they expect the use of such data will grow because of the overwhelmingly positive results they have achieved, especially in the area of managing media budgets, according to a survey from the New York-based Association of National Advertisers (ANA).

The survey, called Using Data to Manage Agency Relationships: What's Important to Marketers," was conducted in August 2016 by the ANA in conjunction with Decideware, a provider of agency management solutions for marketers, to better understand how ANA members use data to manage agency relationships and how learnings can be applied to optimize client/agency performance.

The survey explored the use of data in broad categories of the client/agency relationship, including agency performance evaluations, tracking of agency hours, copy/creative testing, production costs and media efficiencies/budgets. "Data helps build better relationships between the client and agency, helping both parties focus on outcomes," says ANA Group EVP Bill Duggan. "And at a time where there are transparency issues in the industry, the use of data enhances trust."

Key findings include:

Data is frequently used for managing agency relationships, with 80 percent of respondents indicating that they "often or always" use data to manage agency relationships. Use of data to manage agency relationships is increasing, with 84 percent of respondents seeing it growing in their organization and none seeing usage declining.

Use of data for managing agency relationships delivers strong outcomes: 82 percent of respondents saw it contributing to better overall client/agency relationships; 90 percent saw it improving agency efficiencies; and 78 percent saw it improving internal efficiencies at the client's organization.

Data is most important and most heavily used in managing media and billing/budgets and least important and least-used in the areas of creative and production. Among the 37 performance metrics evaluated in this survey, media-related metrics account for seven of the 10 highest-rated metrics for importance. The specific media-related metrics that rated highest were efficiency of media buys, delivery of total campaign audience goals, and media quality assessment.

Data should be seen as a "force for good" in client/agency relationships: The widespread and increasing use of data to help manage agency relationships is leading to more informed decision-making and improved efficiencies at both clients and agencies. Furthermore, the increased use of data is improving transparency and accountability.

Data use in media is critical: Data in media is the most important and most utilized of any category. With media transparency currently a major issue in the industry, the ANA encourages advertisers to assume greater internal stewardship of their media investments and to set up metrics to track performance.

Data in creative warrants more attention: Clients should pay more attention to the processes for briefing and copy approvals and use data to track progress, as the implications of not doing so include increased rework and potentially increased agency fees. Specific suggestions include tracking the number of rounds of revision that work undergoes prior to final approval, the average length of time that each approval step takes, and even "soft" metrics like the quality of the brief.

Clients should leverage data to improve their internal efficiencies: Seventy-eight percent of respondents work at companies whose use of data for managing agency relationships helps improve internal efficiencies at the client. Meanwhile, 90 percent work at companies whose use of data for managing agency relationships helps improve agency efficiencies. Certainly, both numbers are high, yet the double-digit gap between the two warrants consideration and suggests that there may be a potential opportunity for clients to further improve their internal efficiencies and processes.

Ninety-two client-side marketers were represented in the survey. Of those, 61 percent were senior marketers (director level and above) and 39 percent were junior marketers (manager level and below). On average, respondents have 18.3 years of experience in marketing/advertising. Fifty-three percent of *respondents work at organizations which have an annual U.S. media budget of $100 million or more, while 47 percent work at organizations which have an annual U.S. media budget of less than $100 million. Those organizations are primarily B2C for 42 percent of respondents, primarily B2B for 13 percent, and equally B2C/B2B for the remainder.*

••• financial services

Finance pros invested in their jobs

Report a positive outlook

Today's finance professionals are optimistic about their companies' performance and view themselves as strategic partners to the business with responsibilities that go beyond traditional finance and accounting roles. However, they are keenly aware of the organizational and technology barriers to success.

These findings, along with other insights into the finance function, come from a survey of more than 250 senior-level finance and accounting professionals commissioned by Host Analytics, a Redwood City, Calif., enterprise performance management (EPM) firm, and conducted by New York-based Radius Global Market Research. The study set out to better understand the role that finance departments play in today's organizations and uncovered perceptions and trends about the role of finance and technology in businesses today.

According to the survey, 74 percent of finance professionals describe their relationship with other operational roles throughout the organization as "extremely good" or "very good." And when it comes to finance's role, when asked "Which of the following best describes the primary mission of the finance department at your company?" respondents answered: work with investors to maximize company value – 25 percent; produce timely and accurate financial records – 22 percent; ensure the correct allocation of resources – 19 percent; be a strategic partner to the business – 17 percent; drive operational excellence through the company – 12 percent; and ensure compliance with laws and regulations – 5 percent.

While the majority of finance professionals report strong relationships throughout the organization and eight out of 10 report a positive outlook on the year, there are technology and cultural influences that impact the finance team's ability to achieve their mission.

From a technology perspective, 50 percent of respondents cited a lack of systems and tools and 48 percent cited difficulty in accessing the necessary data or reports. The non-technology-related factors cited by respondents were "lack of time," "the organization does not value input from finance" and "high staff turnover."

Technology continues to play a bigger role in the finance department with the continued, widespread use of spreadsheets and the rise of big data, EPM solutions and the adoption of cloud-based platforms.

Spreadsheets remain ubiquitous in finance departments with 43 percent of respondents reporting that Microsoft Excel plays a significant role. Today, Excel is also being used as an integral part of their strategic financial processes, with 57 percent of survey respondents using it to meet EPM requirements in planning/budgeting, financial reporting/disclosure and analytics, either on a standalone basis or in conjunction with other tools.

Based on the survey insight, cloud-based EPM interest and adoption continues to grow as 41 percent of respondents currently have a cloud-based EPM solution, 29 percent are evaluating them, 23 percent plan to move to the cloud in the next few years, 5 percent are planning to move to the cloud in the next two to three years and only 2 percent reportedly have no intentions to move to the cloud. But that doesn't mean the use of Excel will end anytime soon, with 46 percent saying it will continue to play a role in their EPM processes in the next three to five years.

According to the survey, the two biggest concerns in moving to a cloud-based EPM are performance and security. However, businesses are getting used to the idea, with 88 percent citing they are more comfortable today with it than they were two to three years ago.

Along with moving to the cloud, finance professionals are also turning to non-financial big data from sales, marketing and the supply chain to help with the planning process. When asked, "In what time frame does your company plan to use big data or non-financial data in the planning or reporting process?" 28 percent reported they currently use it and 71 percent plan to use it over the next one to three years.

This research was completed by over 250 executives in the accounting and finance field, randomly recruited by Radius Research from a large pool representative of the market. Forty percent of the executives surveyed for the study were C-level, with 35 percent being directors and 26 percent being vice presidents and/or controllers. Participants came from a range of industries including services, manufacturing, retail, software developers/vendors, health care, non-profit and education, with 19 percent of the respondents working at companies with $1 billion or more of revenue.

Q

IN FOCUS

Product and Service Update

••• survey design

Lightspeed offers survey-optimization tools

From QuestionArts team

Warren, N.J., researcher Lightspeed's QuestionArts team has rolled out its latest product enhancement features, Intelligent Components. Intelligent Components optimize surveys for respondents on all devices, screen sizes and orientations, improving user experience and enhancing data quality to clients. Key features include: built-in intelligent layout rules – Intelligent Components have been set up with a built-in prescriptive set of intelligent layout rules designed to lead to better user experience and survey consistency; touch-screen optimization – a range of new features to exploit a device's touch-screen capabilities for ranking, question grouping and nesting, drag-and-drop and advanced sliding-grid functionality; and fully responsive components – respondents can answer the survey on their smartphones or tablets in portrait or landscape mode.
www.lightspeedresearch.com

quirks.com/articles/2017/20170404.aspx

••• survey design

Confirmit targets more-engaging surveys

Deploys across multiple channels

Researcher Confirmit, based in Oslo, Norway, has launched Confirmit Survey Designer, which aims to simplify survey creation and help combat declining response rates and low respondent engagement. The solution allows designers to use features that increase response rates and capture insights including question types, multimedia clips and a range of feedback methods. Confirmit Survey Designer is available at no cost for its existing Professional Authoring customers and is intended to complement that environment so designers can use either one or toggle between the two when designing a single survey. This provides the ability to author a questionnaire once, then deploy it across multiple channels – including Web, CAPI, telephone, mobile, SMS, IVR and more – to ensure the most efficient use of design time.
www.confirmit.com

••• customer experience

Reports chart how to grab customer attention

Draw on non-conscious methods

Cleveland-based customer engagement firm Precision Dialogue has released the first two parts of its new research series, How to Catch and Keep Customer Attention. In part one of the series, 10 Key Findings in Eye Tracking Research, Precision Dialogue's team used non-invasive eye-tracking technology to identify what users saw and didn't see when they interacted with popular B2C brands, both online and offline. Part two, Four UX Discoveries Through Emotional Testing, reviews the emotional responses of each user, measured by electroencephalograph (EEG) technology, with the aim of providing immediate insight into consumer reactions as users carried out common online tasks across a variety of industries, including e-commerce and financial services. Often used in conjunction with traditional user experience testing, eye-tracking and emotional testing provide a layer of qualitative and quantitative data, enabling brands to create content users can easily consume. Both downloadable resources are free (registration required).
www.precisiondialogue.com

••• Briefly

- Marking the beginning of a partnership between research firms M/A/R/C and ZappiStore, concept testing tool M/A/R/C Rapid Results has gone live on ZappiStore. The tool is live in the U.S. and will launch in Canada, the U.K. and 22 other markets in the next few months.
www.zappistore.com

- Wilmington, Del., research software company Q One Tech has released the Q One market research platform, which includes panel management, data collection and survey design. Project information, collected data and panel participation are tracked in real time and the platform works on multiple channels including online, SMS, VOIP and fax.
www.qone-tech.com

- U.K. video research firm Voxpopme has launched Voxpopme Offline, a new app that allows researchers to capture video feedback in-field without an Internet connection, using mo-

bile or tablet devices. With the app, researchers can record respondents in an interview style, capturing video responses that can later be uploaded to the Voxpopme portal. It can be integrated into existing survey platforms or used as a standalone tool.
site.voxpopme.com

■ Nielsen, New York, has reported its plans to expand Nielsen Scarborough, its in-market consumer insights service, to local markets nationwide. The expansion will begin introducing new markets in the second half of 2017 and will add 59 designated market areas to the 151 currently measured.
www.nielsen.com

■ Santa Clara, Calif., customer analytics firm NetBase has released NetBase Instant Search, enabling companies to see, analyze and get insights into social posts using a search bar. NetBase Instant Search can be used as a standalone or complementary social analytics engine across three different modes of operation.
www.netbase.com

■ Stamford, Conn., research technology firm FocusVision has launched FV360 Live, its new focus group video system that uses 360-degree cameras. The system allows expressions, emotions and non-verbal cues of participants to be witnessed in-the-moment, with the camera automatically following the conversation. It also allows for the production of videos by linking to FV Video Insights, the company's platform for storing, editing, analyzing and distributing video.
www.focusvision.com

■ In Los Angeles, audience sampling firm Innovate has released its newly-enhanced Supplier API Suite. Innovate's SAS platform is an application programming interface that connects supplier sample to the firm's internal sampling system. The development will help research agencies' clients access hard-to-reach global audiences and reduces the need to use multiple sampling vendors.
www.innovatemr.com

■ Warren, N.J., researcher Lightspeed has expanded its data service capability AmplifyR Appends to the U.K., France, Germany and the Netherlands.
www.lightspeedresearch.com

■ Berlin-based mobile data exchange company adsquare is making region-based consumer insights from Nuremberg, Germany, researcher GfK available on its platform. The GfK data offered by adsquare includes local insights on financial market segments, consumer styles and purchasing power for up to 60 retail product lines.
www.adsquare.com

■ Denver-based researcher GutCheck has launched Competitive Checkpoint, a quantitative solution that allows marketers and researchers to see how their top product ideas compare to the current competing brands and products instead of historical databases.
www.gutcheckit.com

■ Social listening consultancy Bakamo.Social, headquartered in Budapest, Hungary, has launched Market Maps, a social listening product that shows the motivations and needs of consumers in any category.
www.bakamosocial.com

■ Baldwinsville, N.Y., firm Research & Marketing Strategies Inc. has launched a new, redesigned Web site.
rmsresults.com

■ Measurement company Verto Analytics, San Francisco, has launched Smart Poll, a product that combines surveys with digital behavioral data collected through passive metering from the Verto Smart Panel, an opt-in panel of global consumers, showing how consumers' opinions and decisions correlate with their actual behavior.
www.vertoanalytics.com

■ Loyalty programs provider Maritz Motivation Solutions, St. Louis, has launched the LoyaltyNext Gift Portal, allowing loyalty program members to choose their own custom rewards. Gift Portal also assists brands with attracting new members, showing customer appreciation and resolving service failures.
www.maritzmotivation.com

Maximizing effective sample size while sample balancing

| By Albert Madansky and Linus Schrage

snapshot

The authors explore a procedure that aims to achieve sample balancing and guarantee that the weights produced provide the largest possible effective sample size.

The goal of sample balancing is to provide a weight for each respondent in the sample such that the weighted marginals on each of a set of characteristics matches preset values of those marginals. This process is sometimes called raking or rim weighting. There are many computer procedures which do this, none of which produce weights which maximize effective sample size. This article introduces a procedure which achieves sample balancing and guarantees that the weights so produced will provide the largest possible effective sample size. Since significance testing is highly sensitive to the effective sample size, it is important for researchers to use weights which correspond to the highest effective sample size.

The most common procedure used to produce these weights is iterative proportional fitting, a procedure devised by Deming and Stephan (1940) and further explicated in Chapter 7 of Deming (1943). As shown by Fienberg (1970), iterative proportional fitting has the nice property of converging to a set of nonnegative weights. However, these weights do not have any optimal properties.

The Deming and Stephan (1940) and Deming (1943) works also included a goodness-of-fit metric, along with a procedure for optimizing it. Their measure was a chi-square-like metric:

$$\sum_{\text{all margnals}} \frac{(\,\textit{fitted target} - \textit{marginal target})^2}{\textit{observed marginal}}$$

In the 1960s J. Stephens Stock, a colleague of Deming, developed a computer program for producing weights that optimize their modified measure of goodness of fit:

$$\sum_{\text{all margnals}} \frac{(\,\textit{fitted target} - \textit{marginal target})^2}{(\textit{observed marginal})^2}$$

Unfortunately, Stock and his Market-Math Inc. partner Jerry Green never published their program but made it available to the market research community[1]. And it is this algorithm which is the default weighting algorithm in The Analytical Group's WinCross.

This algorithm, and the linear and GREG weighting procedures (see Deville and Särndal (1992) and Deville, Särndal, and Sautory, (1993)) that seek to find weights which will optimize their associated criteria, may arrive at negative weights for some of the observations. This is because the data may be so inconsistent with the target marginals that the only way to reconcile the two is to create some negative weights. Dorofeev and Grant (2006, page 57) have presented an example of a weighting situation where the only possible set of weights which work include some negative weights. Their example is the following:

quirks.com/articles/2017/20170405.aspx

level	1	2	3	target
1	5	7	10	25
2	3	0	0	15
3	9	10	1	5
target	10	15	20	

For the second row sum to be 15, the weight on cell (2, 1) must be 5. But 5 times 3 exceeds 10, so that either cells (1, 1) and (3, 1) must have negative weights in order for the first column sum to be 10.

Of course this is an unnatural example, in that there are 0s in columns 2 and 3 of row 2. But it illustrates the problem, which can occur even in perturbations of this example where the 0s are replaced by small nonzero frequencies. Mathematically, for this example we must solve six linear equations – corresponding to the six targets – for nine unknowns – the nine cell weights, with the constraint that the nine unknowns must all be positive. There are lots of solutions to this mathematical problem, of which iterative proportional fitting may converge on one, but the moment a goodness-of-fit criterion is superimposed on this problem, the imbalance of the data with the targets can show up in the form of negative weights.

The negative weights may be eliminated by the use of quadratic programming (see Schrage (2016)), an optimization algorithm invented in 1955 but not considered by either Deming or Stock as a means of optimizing their respective measures of goodness of fit. As can be seen from the above goodness of fit formulas, the marginal targets and observed marginals are constants, so that the goodness of fits are quadratic functions of the fitted target. Unfortunately, as will be seen in the example below, there may be multiple sets of weights which minimize the goodness of fit measure.

Kish (1965, Section 8.2, p. 258) coined the name "design effect (Deff)" as the ratio of the variance of a statistic under simple random sampling without replacement with a sample size of n to the variance of the statistic under the complex design with the same sample size. If the statistic is the sample mean, then the variance of the statistic is σ^2/n, where σ^2 is the variance of the population. In the case of weighted simple random samples in which the sum of the weights is n, the variance of the weighted mean is σ^2/f, where f is given by

$$f = \frac{n^2}{\sum_{i=1}^{n} w_i^2}$$

and w_i is the weight of the i-th sample member. We call f the effective sample size for the weighted sample. In statistical testing for equality of weighted means and/or weighted proportions, it is the effective sample size that is used in determining the standard error of the weighted mean.

We posit as a new criterion for selection of weights that of maximizing effective sample size. This criterion maximizes f given above, or equivalently minimizes its denominator. Since the denominator is a quadratic function of the weights and the marginal constraints are linear constraints of the weights, the selection of optimum weights can be performed using quadratic programming (see Schrage (2016)). Using this criterion for sample balancing will both guarantee nonnegative weights and guarantee the highest possible effective sample size for the weighted sample.

An example

Consider for example the data in Appendix I, in which there are 300 respondents classified by age and region, and in which the observed and target marginals are shown in the following chart.

The weights produced by iterative proportional fitting (IPF), by two different quadratic programming minimizations of the Stock goodness of fit, and by maximizing the effective sample size (ess) subject to these marginal targets are given alongside the observations in Appendix I. As one can see, there are multiple sets of weights which minimize the Stock goodness of fit criterion. The effective sample size

age	observed	target
1	20	66
2	17	75
3	63	30
4	38	69
5	54	30
6	108	30
TOTAL	300	300
region	**observed**	**target**
1	107	60
2	29	60
3	38	36
4	27	60
5	93	60
6	6	24
TOTAL	300	300

based on IPF is 78.22 and that of maximizing ess is 95.89, a 22.6 percent gain. (The effective sample sizes of the two sets of weights exhibited that minimize the Stock goodness of fit are 75.71 and 18.82, respectively. And incidentally, quadratic programming can also find the set of sample balancing weights which produce the worst possible effective sample size, which in this case is 14.36.)

One should note that some of the cells get 0 as weights when the effective sample size is maximized. (In our example, cells 31, 41, 51, and 61 got 0 weights.) One nice feature of quadratic programming is that, instead of setting the constraints on the weights as being ≥ 0, one can set the constraints on the weights as being at least some positive number. With this modification one can still insure that the marginal constraints are met, that each cell will have a positive weight greater than some lower bound and in addition find the weights that produce the largest effective sample size. We illustrate this in Appendix I by exhibiting weights which achieve sample balancing and in which we require the weights to be at least 0.02. The effective sample size using this set of weights is 95.11, less than a 1 percent reduction from the optimal ess.

LINDO Systems Inc. has implemented a module which uses quadratic programming as described above to produce weights which satisfy the marginal constraints and produce the largest possible effective sample size. Optionally, it will find such weights all of which will be larger than a fixed minimum. This module also will find a set of weights which minimize the Stock goodness of fit.

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APPENDIX I

DATA AND WEIGHTS

age/region	observed	IPF weight	min Stock solution 1	min Stock solution 2	max ess wt	max ess wt with .02 floor
11	13	1.7899	3.5930	0.0000	2.3827	2.3129
12	2	8.1414	5.3050	3.0000	5.6199	5.7589
13	2	5.6867	2.4977	0.0000	4.8932	5.0421
14	1	8.6130	0.0000	60.0000	5.6823	5.8201
15	2	3.2312	1.8429	0.0000	4.1581	4.2548
16	0					
21	9	2.1464	1.4768	6.6667	3.2250	3.1369
22	2	9.7630	5.6124	0.0000	6.4622	6.5828
23	0					
24	2	10.3285	5.8789	0.0000	6.5246	6.6440
25	4	3.8748	9.6816	3.7500	5.0004	5.0787
26	0					
31	23	0.2000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0200
32	9	0.9096	1.4235	2.6667	1.4902	1.4727
33	11	0.6353	0.6122	0.5455	0.7635	0.7560
34	5	0.9622	2.0910	0.0000	1.5526	1.5339
35	15	0.3610	0.0000	0.0000	0.0284	0.0200
36	0					
41	8	0.5686	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0200
42	3	2.5861	3.0460	0.0000	2.9499	2.9629
43	4	1.8064	1.2845	0.0000	2.2231	2.2462
44	6	2.7359	3.6021	0.0000	3.0122	3.0241
45	15	1.0264	1.1725	3.0000	1.4881	1.4588
46	2	8.8285	7.7615	12.0000	5.4317	5.4701
51	17	0.2640	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0200
52	3	1.2006	4.5137	0.0000	1.8503	1.8656
53	7	0.8386	1.2966	4.2857	1.1235	1.1489
54	4	1.2702	1.8456	0.0000	1.9126	1.9268
55	23	0.4765	0.0000	0.0000	0.3885	0.3615
56	0					
61	37	0.1021	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0200
62	10	0.4645	0.2675	3.0000	0.8023	0.7577
63	14	0.3245	0.7183	0.0000	0.0756	0.0409
64	9	0.4914	0.9769	0.0000	0.8647	0.8189
65	34	0.1844	0.0000	0.0000	0.0000	0.0200
66	4	1.5858	2.1192	0.0000	3.2842	3.2649

FOOTNOTE

[1] In Public Opinion of Criminal Justice in California, a 1974 report for the Institute of Environmental Studies at University of California Berkeley by the Field Research Corp., we find a use of this algorithm, with the note (p. 118) "...the weighting correction is based on a design concept originated by the late J. Stephens Stock and Market-Math Inc. It is currently used by Field Research Organization and several other leading research organizations."

case study

••• customer experience research

Getting a grip

How the YMCA used journey-mapping to boost member retention

| By Jim Tincher

snapshot

After an attempt to enhance customer experience using Six Sigma fell short, the YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities turned to journey-mapping.

quirks.com/articles/2017/20170406.aspx

While most organizations struggle to define and dominate a specific niche market, the YMCA aims to serve everyone, promoting wellness in “body, mind, and spirit,” from birth to death, regardless of gender, religion, background, or income. That’s no small feat, yet the Y has been doing it in the Twin Cities, and doing it well, for more than 160 years. But the scope of that mission does present challenges when it comes to evaluating and improving the customer experience.

In the United States alone, there are about 2,700 YMCA locations, serving more than 20 million people. The structure of the organization is key to its success. Some branches operate independently, while some are members of regional associations, and all belong to national and global federations. This empowers each branch, and each association, with the flexibility to implement programming that meets the unique needs of its surrounding community, while also reaping benefits from the guidance and resources of a larger, centralized organization.

The YMCA of the Greater Twin Cities, the fourth-largest Y association in the world, knew it earned high marks for programming and service overall, but recognized that its customers would be more likely to thrive, and maintain their memberships, if it learned more about the early stages of their wellness journeys. What led people to join the Y? What were their needs and expectations? What more could the Y be doing to encourage them? These were the insights that would boost member satisfaction and loyalty. But when you serve 250,000 people across the entire Minneapolis/St. Paul metropolitan area, where do you start?

Prior efforts to enhance the customer experience using Six Sigma methodology fell short. The Y experience is unique for each customer and segment, so using internal journey-mapping and quantitative data to standardize and improve performance failed to produce the desired outcome. Instead, it resulted in findings inadvertently tainted by

organizational biases, and muddled operations with little interdepartmental collaboration or oversight.

Senior Director of Member Engagement Andrea Krohnberg and Chief Experience Officer Bob Thomas knew a different approach was needed. They wanted a customer-focused look at member retention that would provide valid and valuable insights into what their customers were thinking and feeling as they joined the Y community. That's when they turned to our firm, Heart of the Customer (HoC), a Minneapolis journey-mapping and customer experience company.

We emphasized from the start that HoC's journey-mapping process was about more than just creating a map. Each step would propel the project toward the ultimate goal: helping the Y develop cost-effective, actionable solutions.

"Jim and his team made it clear that putting the customer first would necessitate a top-to-bottom cultural shift in the organization, and interdepartmental collaboration that would require buy-in at all levels," Krohnberg says. "To achieve that, we needed to have all our stakeholders on board from the start, so that they knew they were part of a valued cross-functional team, rather than just told what to do after the fact, without having had any input."

Phase one: discovery

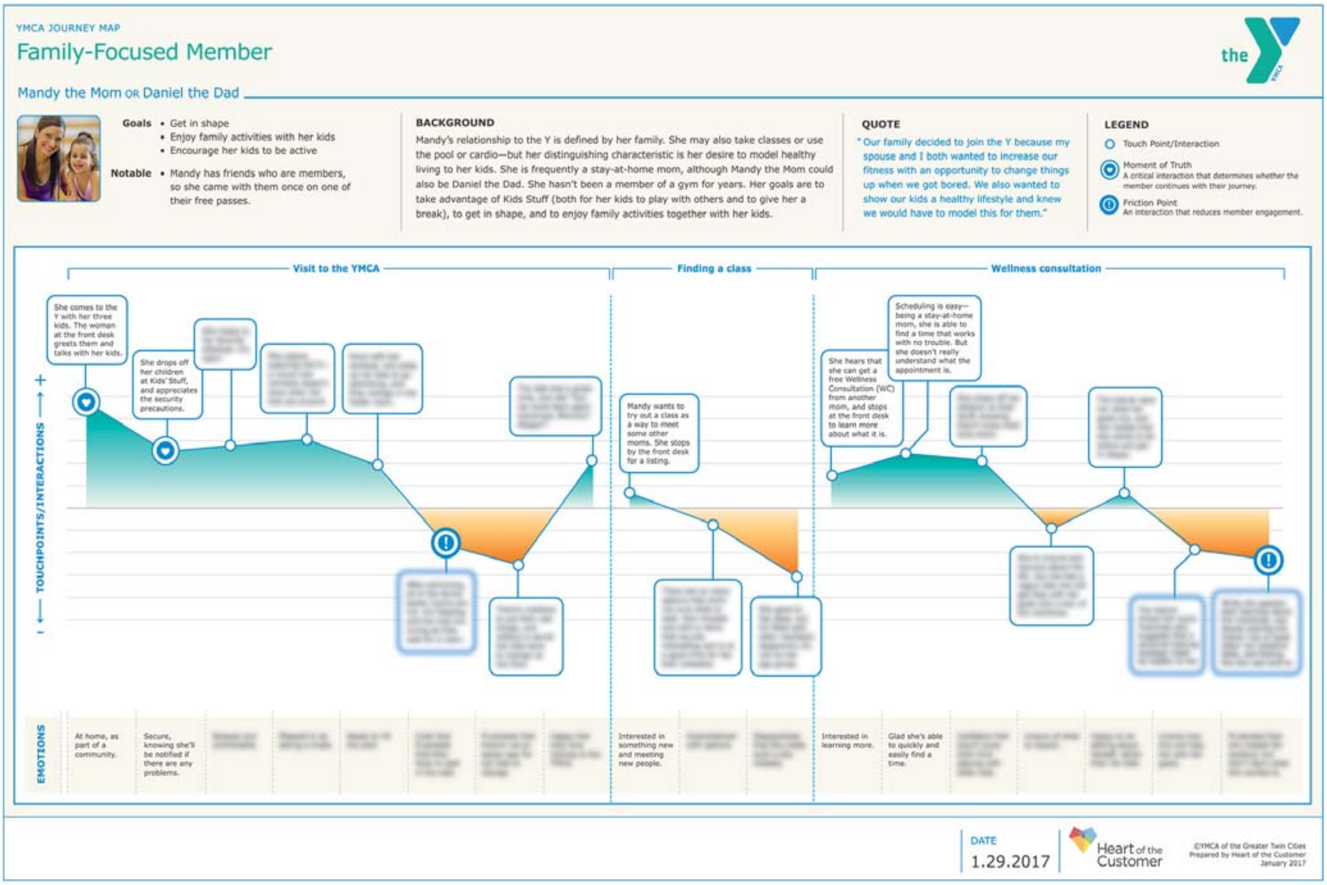
Krohnberg and Thomas identified and gathered a group of about 20, including a field team and senior executives, tapping the people best positioned to ensure the success of post-project initiatives. Guided by HoC, they reviewed existing research and trends, shared their own experiences and observations and generated hypotheses. One important takeaway from these initial meetings was that team members sometimes struggled to prioritize, because of conflicting demands imposed by multiple departments acting independently.

Once the group fine-tuned its objectives, they set out to explore the customer experience through new members' eyes by making two fundamental decisions: the parameters of the journey and the segment of customers to include.

After careful consideration, they chose to focus on Millennial new customers – single and married members in their 20s and 30s, with and without children. The journey would encompass four branch visits and a Wellness Consultation over a three-week period, at four typical suburban branches. The selected locations represented a geographically diverse area, a range of retention rates and a wealth of desirable resources, including exercise equipment, weight rooms, swimming pools, a robust schedule of free group classes and Kids Stuff, the Y's popular onsite free childcare, which provides safe, supervised play for kids while parents work out or relax in the building. In total, 33 participants – recruited when they joined the Y or soon after – enrolled in the study.

Phase two: external insights

Using mobile ethnographies to collect the empirical data meant that study participants would be able to utilize text, photos and videos to share – in real time – what they saw, felt and did before, during and after their visits to the Y (with the caveat, of course, that no images were to be recorded in the locker rooms or of other Y members). HoC customized a mobile platform to meet the study's needs so participants could record their observations on computer or, ideally, their smartphones. They were prompted with multiple questions, starting with their reasons for joining and what it felt like to be a member. Questions about different areas of their branch, such as the pool or locker



room, followed, with participants sharing their comments and rating each on a scale of 1 to 5.

This methodology also allowed the HoC team to interact with participants, to build trust, and, when warranted, probe deeper. Krohnberg and Thomas monitored the observations but didn't have direct contact with participants. In this way, they harnessed HoC's experience in journey-mapping and project management and freed themselves to focus on providing direction based on their knowledge of Y operations and offerings. This ensured a thorough exploration of all relevant avenues and optimized the findings without tainting them.

The result was a treasure trove of revealing qualitative data, with three distinct personas taking shape:

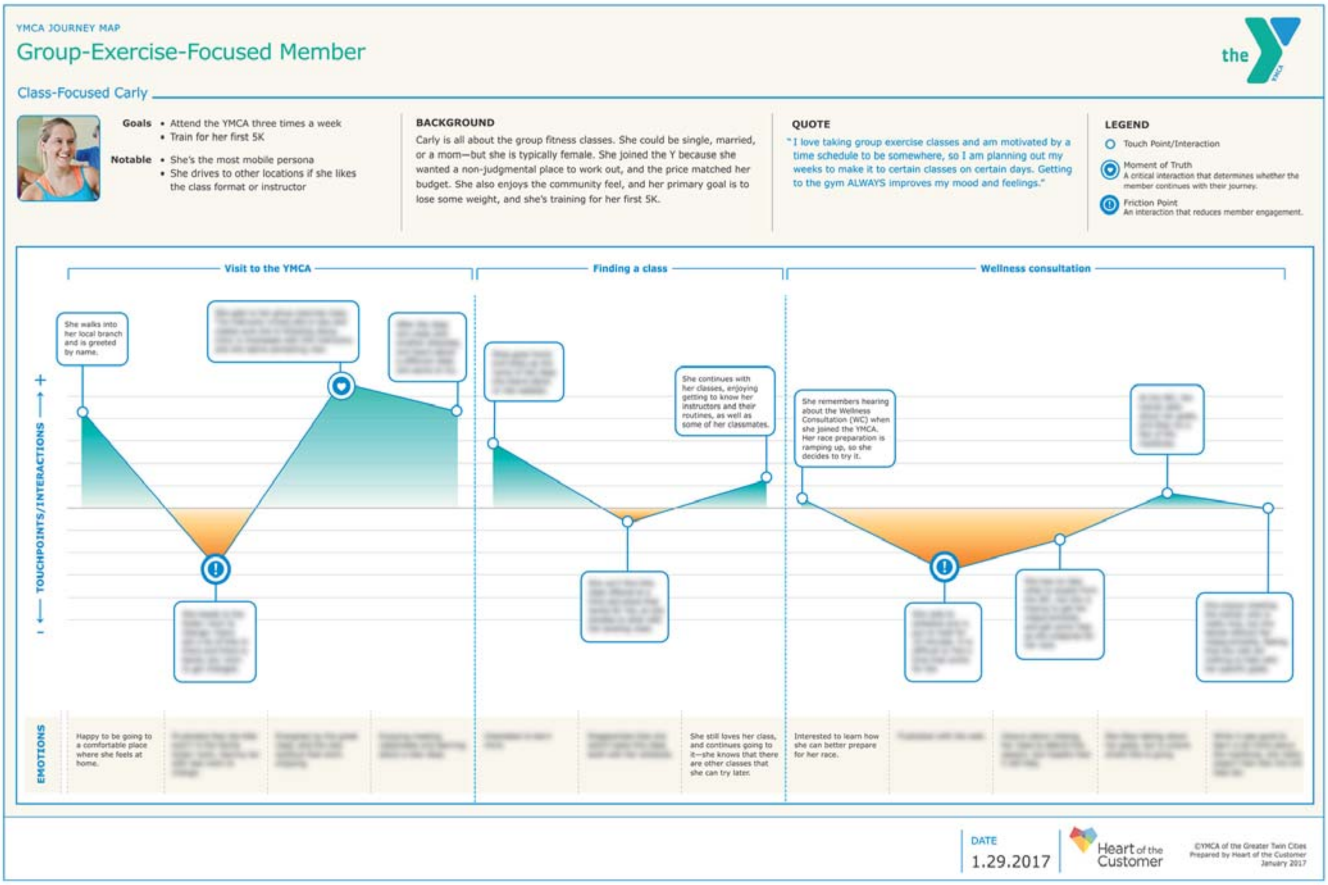
- class-focused customers, typically female, who were accustomed to attending a gym and joined primarily for group classes;
- customers with young children, typically less familiar with gyms, who wanted to model healthy behaviors for their kids; they enjoyed both the family time as well as time away from their children; and
- workout-focused customers, typically male, who were focused on exercising and getting in and out with few distractions.

Not surprisingly, fitness-related goals led all three personas to join the Y, with many citing the accepting, non-intimidating atmosphere as a big draw, as well as positive recollections of participating in Y programming as children. Some were also eager to meet new people, use the pool, enjoy some family time and/or train for a race.

The team saw and heard exactly how customers felt as they approached the entrance to their Y at the start of the day. "Man, it's so early this morning and cold but I ate a lot during the Super Bowl and need to be active today," offered one participant. They also learned that customers appreciated being greeted by name at the front desk; knowing their children would be safe and have fun in Kids Stuff while they got a break and worked out; being able to track their progress on machines; the expertise and friendliness of group class instructors; and the endorphin rush they felt after a workout.

Relatively high ratings even in areas that caused some friction indicated that despite room for improvement, customers were generally satisfied with their decision to join. Many customers felt that they didn't have a good grasp on all the Y offers; some even unknowingly signed up for classes meant for seniors because they were confused by the schedule. Wet, crowded locker rooms were also an annoyance, along with limited open swim times and finding a favorite machine in use during peak hours.

The Wellness Consultation was the most common pain point. "It was really eye-opening to hear about the frustration caused by the gap between expectation and reality," says Krohnberg. Customers believed it had the potential to be helpful but found it difficult to schedule and didn't know what to expect. As a result, they came up with their own ideas about what it would include, then came away disappointed when it didn't. The content of the consultation varied by branch and trainer, adding to the confusion. Customers



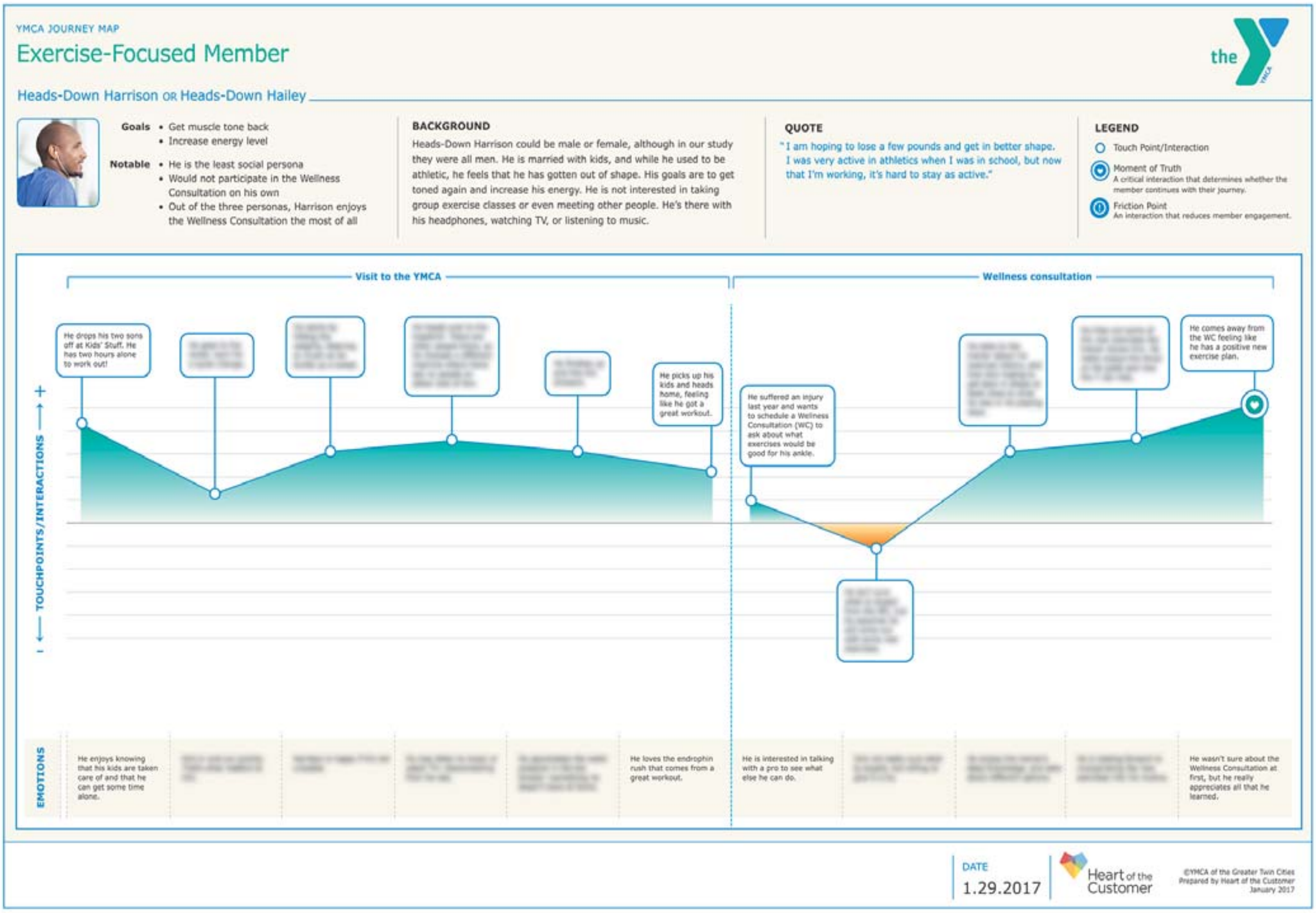
wanted help devising a fitness plan, nutritional tips and baseline measurements. Instead, many left feeling that the main purpose was to sell personal-training packages.

Phase three: journey-mapping

HoC distilled all the data into customized, informative journey maps, with graphics that made it easy to digest. The maps (see accompanying examples) showed what each persona felt and thought arriving, working out, signing up for classes and attending the Wellness Consultation, with the points of friction and moments of truth they faced along the way clearly indicated.

Phase four: action!

In the final phase, the project transitioned from data gathering to data utilization. During an all-day workshop with the initial cross-functional team (plus a few new players), HoC presented a summary of its research, a rundown of recurring themes and recommendations for focus areas most likely to boost loyalty in Millennials. HoC also shared the latest findings about customer behavior, including the science behind habit formation, the importance of ending a customer experience on a strong note (because that memory can linger longest) and the key role achieving goals and forging social connections plays in boosting customer loyalty. A series of empathy-building exercises designed to deepen understanding of the customer experience primed the team for the most important task of the day: brainstorming ideas for customer-centric initiatives based on the revelations of the journey maps.



The presentation and exercises provided rich soil in which bold, new thinking could take root. Dividing into groups, team members worked quickly at first, tossing out as many ideas as they could. The most popular ideas were then explored and expanded upon, after being reviewed, rated and prioritized by the whole team.

The result? An impressive crop of both long-term strategies and quick wins (simple but impactful changes that yield a high ROI). Tops in the quick-win column was training front-desk employees to acknowledge members on their way out as enthusiastically as they greet them when they arrive – a cost-free, easy-to-implement step that ends visits on a high note, increasing members' desire to return. Other initiatives addressed making the class schedule easier for newbies to navigate and opening channels between branches so that customers having trouble finding the right class could easily check offerings at nearby Ys. Leveraging existing content to offer short videos with class descriptions, a suggestion made by study participants who'd seen such videos on YouTube, will also enhance the customer experience with virtually no outlay.

Discussion of more complex stratagems led the Y to devise a comprehensive 90-day welcome program, specifically designed to foster social connections and bolster nascent healthy habits. The Y is continuing on to build a proactive approach that will give new members the tools and support they need to meet workout buddies, navigate offerings and set quantifiable goals – all determinant factors of member engagement, commitment and success.

Adding a layer of governance ties these initiatives together. The active involvement of senior leadership from all relevant departments in all member-facing programs provides accountability and supervision, facilitates consistent and cooperative implementation and avoids lowering morale and overburdening team members with conflicting programs.

Trusted the brand

One last lesson learned: goodwill goes a long way. Journey-mapping not only pointed the Y toward ways to better serve new members, it steered it away from efforts that wouldn't have paid off. Sure, customers were irritated by limited pool access or crowded locker rooms during peak periods but the granular nature of the data HoC collected showed they trusted the Y brand enough to forgive those kinds of inconveniences. With journey maps in hand, the Y was able to zero in on the friction points that really mattered and recalibrate programming to get results. Next on the agenda? In its ongoing effort to improve the member experience for all, the Y will use journey-mapping to gain the same kind of insights about existing members.

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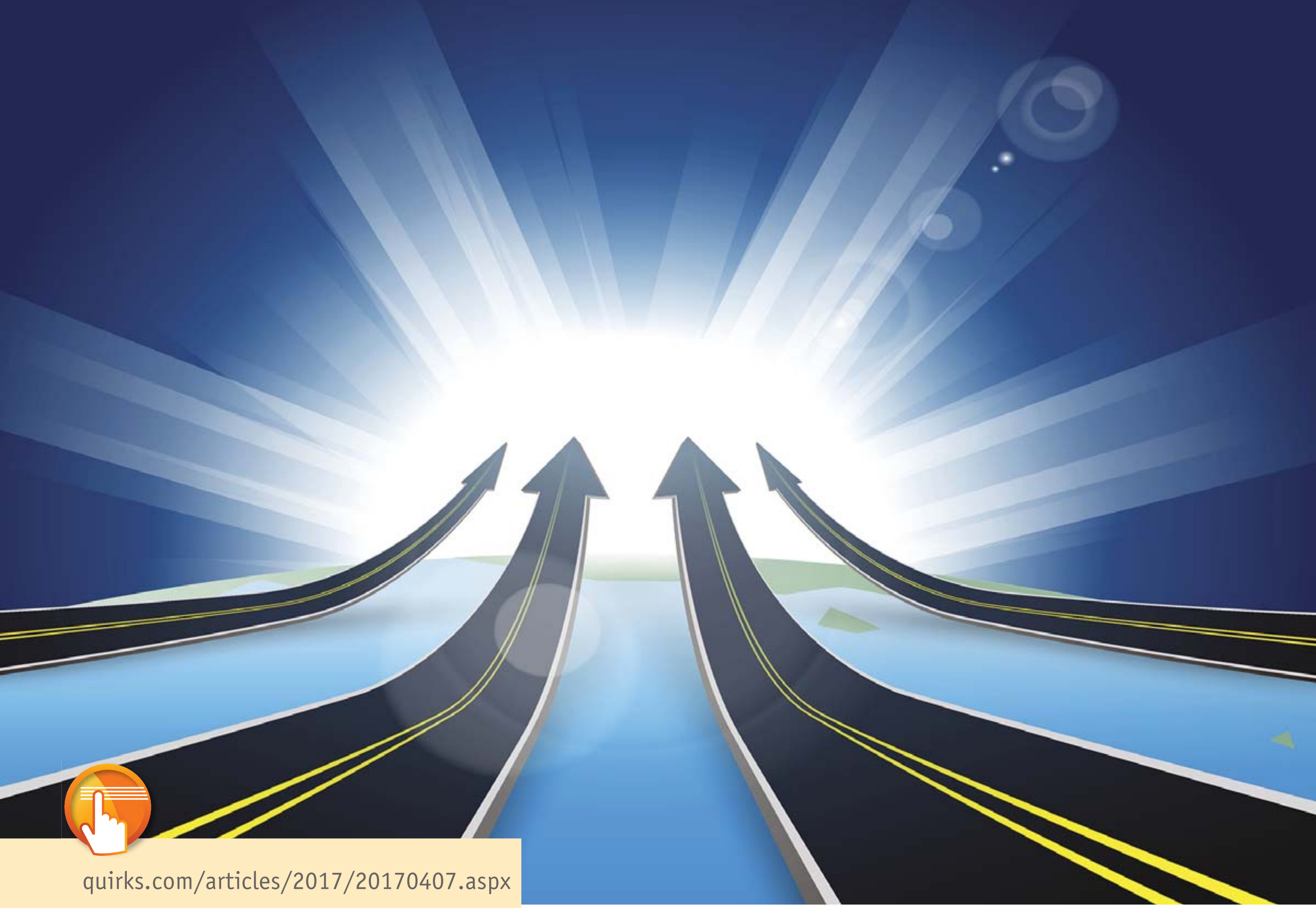

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••• b2b research

Many paths to the same goal

Strategies for optimizing B2B survey research

| By Doug Berdie

snapshot

From sampling to post-research action-planning, Doug Berdie walks through the steps of a B2B research project.

Imagine you work at the fictional company TechniNano Inc. and your VP of marketing asked you to design a system allowing the company to conduct periodic B2B surveys so it can determine: criteria and processes customers/prospective customers use to make purchase decisions; product/service strengths to be leveraged and areas needing improvement; evolving marketplace needs; and whether/how customers should be segmented for marketing.

You've been involved with consumer surveys but realize B2B surveys might be different. What do you need to know?

The most fundamental difference between B2B and consumer surveys is that most B2B surveys are conducted to draw conclusions about organizations, whereas almost all consumer surveys wish to draw conclusions about individual people. Dealing effectively with this critical difference can result in highly effective B2B surveys, whereas

failure to deal with it can result in sub-optimal surveys.

B2B sampling issues

Companies conduct B2B surveys to understand the perspectives/experiences of: clients to whom they sell direct; companies who buy their products/services indirectly – through dealers, distributors and others in the channel; and channel partners who buy to resell to end users.

Surveys of each type present their own challenges. For example, TechniNano is more likely to know the identities of clients to whom it sells direct than it is the identities of companies who deal with TechniNano channel partners. Hence, it is easier to know whom to survey in the former than the latter. And, when assessing the experiences of its own channel partners, in addition to asking about product/service issues, TechniNano must include questioning that addresses partner fears of channel conflict and other business issues unique to the channel relationship. Failure to do so undercuts credibility and prevents buy-in from partners.

Deciding which person to survey for B2B surveys is rarely easy. The first step is to be clear as to whether one wants to assess specific interactions or measure more of an overall relationship. For evaluations of specific interactions, the actual person who had the experience is best qualified to evaluate it. Identifying that person is best done at the time of the experience. Although this seems simple, unless a careful identify-capture process is established, this information may not be available – and is difficult to resurrect later.

Assessing an overall relationship may span a variety of interactions of different types and it is often a manager with familiarity of the entire span of experiences who is best qualified to provide comprehensive feedback. Resist the temptation simply to survey top executives. For example, plant managers may have an overview of what happens in a manufacturing plant but a survey related to electronic process control equipment is best directed to the process manager and/or the maintenance engineer. Determining which job titles have the desired knowledge requires up-front, qualitative research – especially when a project is being initially designed.

Job titles can be misleading. For example, in some companies the title "manager" is a mid-level position, whereas in other companies that title carries more responsibility. Although how job titles are used is to some extent related to industry, company-specific behaviors vary and one cannot assume the same roles across companies for the same titles.

Many B2B companies do not know the identities of all relevant people at their clients' organizations. They usually know the executives but likely do not know all the people involved in placing orders, product installations, daily operations, etc. Yet these people often have precisely the information needed to gauge and improve products and customer service. And experience has shown that company databases are usually deficient as a source of such identities. Investigating supplemental techniques to find the names of people is time well spent.

Techniques to identify names of B2B people to survey:

- Assess CRM databases for completeness/accuracy/up-to-dateness.
- Investigate additional customer lists beyond CRM databases.
- Work with sales force to capitalize on rep knowledge.
- Use skilled telephone interviewers to conduct calls to identify names.
- Utilize commercial databases as identity supplements.

Some B2B companies have few customers and some sell to thousands. In either case, sample designs should help companies profile their most important customers while also paying enough attention to smaller, perhaps evolving, customers to produce a customer-wide profile.

Consider surveying more than one person at a given organization. For example, if you want to learn why TechniNano wins some bids and loses others, you must survey the person who makes the purchase decision. If you also want feedback related to TechniNano's billing, customer service, product repair, etc., you must survey people who deal in those areas. Sometimes, a given person deals with multiple parts of the process while at other organizations it may be a separate person dealing with each aspect of the experience.

Another B2B sampling-related complexity relates to companies vs. sites. TechniNano has some clients who have purchased equipment that is installed at, say, 40 sites across the world, whereas other clients have all their installed equipment at one site. In situations where the equipment is at many sites, it is likely that client operations and service personnel exist at each site and it may be necessary to get feedback from multiple sites to fully reveal how well TechniNano is serving this type of customer. An additional consideration is that, among customers with multiple sites, some functions (such as purchase decisions) are made centrally and others locally. Careful up-front work is needed to understand the dynamics at play so appropriate sampling decisions can be made.

Techniques to address B2B sample issues:

- Ensure key accounts are comprehensively covered; sampling others.
- Obtain information from right level – usually not upper management.
- Be flexible as to eligible job titles given that the meaning of titles varies.
- Sample by job roles not just customer accounts.
- In relevant situations, sample by sites not just companies.
- Factor in centralized vs. local decision-making.

When surveying customers of competitors, identifying the people to survey has additional challenges including finding them (companies, and people within them) and motivating these people to respond.

In settings such as TechniNano's, the company knows most potential customers because it is calling on them. In cases where the potential customer base may be much larger, use of trade industry and other (e.g., Dun & Bradstreet) databases sorted by NAICS/SIC classifications may solve the problem. A common solution is B2B online panels, which can be a good resource, realizing that some industries are not well-represented in panels.

Motivating competitive customers involves finding an effective incentive. For panels, the benefit is usually cash or some non-cash reward. These incentives work for non-panels as well, though other incentives (such as a summary of survey results – those the sponsor does not mind sharing) may be more effective.

Some panel members complete surveys capriciously. Hence, including some trap questions and speeding checks is advised. The former instruct respondents to answer a particular question in a certain way and serve as a check on attentiveness. The latter detect people who are moving at an unreasonably fast pace so they can be disqualified.

Techniques to survey competitive customers effectively:

- Explore a variety of sources to identify these customers.
- Allocate sufficient time/resources to drill down to find names of people.
- Check with general and specialty B2B panels to assess viability.
- To motivate, offer a summary of selected survey results, if feasible.
- Include trap questions and speeding checks.

When surveying customers of channel partners, other complexities exist. Channel partners are often nervous about sharing customer names with the supplier because they fear the supplier may start selling directly to their customers. Assess the extent to which this "channel-conflict" concern exists. If it does, it must be resolved. One way is for an independent third party to receive and maintain the customers' names and administer the survey after having signed nondisclosure agreements with the channel partners.

Another channel issue is whether all the partner's customers should be surveyed or only those who have TechniNano products. In some cases, manufacturers only wish feedback from companies using their products, while in other cases feedback from channel partner customers who buy competitive products is desired. Furthermore, many channel partners prefer a comprehensive view of all their customers and resist surveying only those who buy certain brands.

Some channel partners provide both sales and service (and, in some cases, technical training) whereas others only provide sales. In the latter case, customers may get service directly from the manufacturer or may obtain it from other service providers. Understanding how this works facilitates the most efficient and effective sampling designs.

Techniques to survey channel partner customers successfully:

- Set up nondisclosure agreements where needed.
- Consolidate channel partner and supplier customer survey activities.
- Standardize the formats in which channel partners submit sample.
- Provide options for a) all partner's customers or b) only supplier's.

When surveying the channel partners themselves, as with customers, be certain the most appropriate people within the organization are contacted. Companies will know who the partner principal is but may not know the identities of other personnel who should be surveyed, such as sales managers, service managers, channel relationship managers, etc.

B2B survey questionnaires

B2B surveys are most useful if they contain core questions and the flexibility for drop-in questions of temporal interest. Core questions allow for tracking over time and drop-in questions provide a means to obtain feedback on issues of short-term interest – without having to initiate a separate survey to do so.

Drop-in questions add value for channel partners because partners may be working on different initiatives. Options to select questions that fit their own needs make survey results most meaningful to them. Drop-in questions add much value when the survey is administered on a frequent basis.

The questionnaires for evaluating interactions and those for assessing overall relationships differ in meaningful ways.

Questionnaires to evaluate specific interactions should basically address only issues directly related to the specific customer experience. (They usually include a few firmographic and other classification questions.) The reason these questionnaires are kept short is to 1) focus the respondent's attention on the specific experience and 2) minimize response fatigue so people may be contacted about subsequent interactions without irritating them.

Relationship questionnaires need to be constructed differently given that different people within a B2B customer organization interact with different elements of the customer experience. Most B2B relationship questionnaires benefit from an early role-screening question such as the following (which would be relevant for B2B companies like TechniNano):

Please indicate which one of the following best describes the main role you, personally, have when interacting with TechniNano products/services.

1. Work with TechniNano's sales team to decide which products/services are required
2. Deal with the finances related to buying products such as TechniNano's
3. Actually place orders and/or are involved in scheduling or accepting product/service deliveries
4. Schedule or oversee equipment installations/deployments
5. Do day-to-day operations, maintenance or service on TechniNano products

Responses to this question determine which subsequent question sets the person is asked, ensuring people only answer questions with which they actually have direct experience (resulting in the most reliable feedback). Also, it keeps the survey short enough to ensure a strong and representative response rate. (Good pre-research investigation will reveal when people may have direct experience in more than one area. If so, the questionnaire programming logic is adjusted to let them respond to more than one area of questioning.)

Techniques to ensure B2B questionnaires yield the best data:

- Obtain questionnaire buy-in from stakeholders before launching.
- Use role-screening question to increase reliability and minimize fatigue.
- Include core questions for tracking, drop-in questions for flexibility.
- Keep interaction evaluation questionnaires short.
- Allow partner-specific questions (if relevant) to add value for partner.

B2B data collection

B2B data collection method depends

on the extent to which the identities, phone numbers, e-mail addresses and mail addresses of people are known. Obviously, telephone numbers are required for phone surveys, mail addresses for mail surveys and e-mail addresses for online surveying – except in situations where people are recruited by phone (or other means) and provided with a URL and asked to visit an online site.

Using online has the advantage of allowing for a full array of trade-off techniques (max-diff questioning, discrete choice/conjoint designs, etc.) because people can see questions on the screen. Trade-off options are limited (e.g., paired comparisons) during phone surveys because respondents can only answer simplified questions retained in memory. Online and mail surveys can incorporate photographs and other graphics to help clarify a question's intent. Another advantage of online and mail is people can choose when they wish to complete the survey.

The greatest advantage of telephone surveying is it can obtain a higher response rate and be less prone to non-response bias. However, in today's busy B2B environments, and with the increased use of e-mail, it is difficult to reach people by telephone. Interviewer persistence and creativity are needed to succeed with B2B phone interviews.

In B2B situations where responses from specific customers (e.g., those who buy the most) are extremely important, in-depth telephone or in-person interviewing may be desirable. Talented interviewers can obtain insightful information by probing into responses. When these methods are used, the customer will expect issues that have been brought up to be resolved. So only use these methods if a commitment exists to follow up appropriately.

Techniques to ensure data collection is optimal:

- Ensure method is feasible in terms of obtaining contact information.
- Select data collection method after deciding question types.
- Use interviewers with extensive B2B experience for phone surveys.
- Use mixed modes of collection if necessary.

B2B analysis

Consumer survey analyses profile customer segments according to: product(s) purchased; geography; amount of money spent and share of wallet; attitudinal/behavioral characteristics; length of time as a customer; various demographics such as age, gender income, etc.

B2B analyses usually conduct profiles of many (if not all) the above and also view the data according to: role person surveyed plays in the decision-making process; specific aspect(s) of the relationship in which person is involved; whether customer is at a key account; industry in which customer resides.

B2B analyses also need to combine responses of people from different sites who are all employed by the same customer so that an "overall customer" profile can be shown. These combinations often involve weighting by sales data and other information that varies from site to site.

Techniques to ensure robust B2B analysis and insight:

- Profiles showing customers as a whole and their subdivisions.
- Profiles by the different roles people play.
- Summaries of key customers and other customers and weighted "customers as a whole."

B2B reporting

For B2B reporting of specific interactions, tactics such as the following help:

- Profiling data by specific field personnel managers to assess how well customer-facing personnel have been trained and are performing.
- Displaying rolled up data for regional/district/HQ personnel so they can see how their areas of responsibility perform.
- Allowing managers to indicate in reports customer improvement initiatives with associated responsibility for implementing them – and a tracking mechanism.

For relationship surveys, overall summary reports typically show trends and comparisons among relevant customer subsets. In addition, a tip for B2B surveys is to generate individual sales rep profiles, which:

- Make it easy to see how satisfied customers of a given sales rep are with the things that matter most to them.
- Let account teams review key customers and provide content for having a post-survey discussion with them.
- Can be rolled up to "overall account" profiles – in cases where more than one person from a customer organization has been surveyed.
- Provide managers an easy way to spot trends among given sales reps across accounts and to spot systemic problems that may exist across their sales teams.

Techniques to ensure insightful B2B reporting:

- Use a series of interaction roll-up reports to help managers at all levels.
- Provide individual sales rep reports to profile key B2B customers and rep performance.
- Build action into reporting sites by integrating initiatives/responsibilities.
- Present major themes, keeping details in a supporting, as-needed role.

Turning B2B data into action

Although company cultures vary, proven techniques do exist that help translate data into action, regardless of company.

Setting the stage for action consists of obtaining input – before surveying – from those who will be asked to implement change once survey feedback has been obtained. Without up-front buy-in, unpleasant customer feedback is sometimes dismissed with objections such as the following:

"The survey did not ask the really critical questions."

"The wording in the survey questions is biased."

"You didn't ask the right people the questions. My key customers were not included!"

"You asked people at my customers' sites but you asked the wrong people!"

"You asked about issues about which we can do nothing."

Up-front sign-off from the people who might potentially make such objections allows movement into an open review of results and subsequent action prioritization, planning and implementation.

During planning, identify each company process and its owners. This results in clearly defining who will be responsible for addressing issues so that improvement is not thwarted by arguing over who has responsibility.

Maintaining excitement throughout the process ensures management is ready to move with the results rather than having to gear up once the data arrive. Effective communication during data collection helps keep interest high and dissemination of preliminary findings can keep interest piqued.

Gaining direct, post-survey feedback from customers provides an excellent way to mine data for deeper insights. Presenting results to special ad hoc customer conferences or existing customer (or channel partner) advisory committees results in detailed feedback and recommendations regarding what specific fixes would resolve problems.

Action-planning and prioritization is best accomplished by structured sessions with key management personnel – led by a seasoned moderator with experience across many industries so best practices can be shared. This type of session should: present data so everyone has a common point of reference; allow attendees to clarify issues; allow attendees to indicate situations where more detailed information would be helpful; and end with tentative decisions as to which initiatives will be undertaken, who the primary owners of the initiatives are and who the influencers are who will need to cooperate with the primary owners to ensure smooth implementation of actions.

Techniques to turn B2B data into action:

- Obtain buy-in from stakeholders before data collection proceeds.
- Conduct sessions to clarify process ties, ownership.
- Use ongoing scorecards to keep excitement up.
- Integrate report platforms with action (planning, implementing, tracking).
- Provide drill-down/supplemental data to clarify action requirements.
- Conduct periodic action sessions to update plans, realign actions

Show solid ROI

You will need to show a solid return on investment if you expect TechniNano to continue to fund your B2B survey program. Unless each of the issues reviewed above (from deciding how to sample effectively through working with the data) are conducted carefully, the chances of continued funding are diminished. It is the combination of this sound set of principles that maximizes the likelihood that B2B research meets its intended objectives. You are embarking on an exciting challenge. I wish you well!

Doug Berdie is president of Consumer Review Systems, a Minneapolis research firm. He can be reached at dberdie1@msn.com.

●●● b2b research

Quieting the loudest voice with data

How to drive decisions with customer-choice insights

| By Joe Urbany

snapshot

Using a Venn-diagram-based system, Joe Urbany explores how firms can uncover valuable points of differentiation in the market.

Markets get commoditized very quickly these days, and competitive advantage is often fleeting and complex to define. But it is possible to analyze and take action on differentiation in a data-driven and visual way to engage the team and streamline decision-making.

Here's a scenario we've seen hundreds of times, using a visual method to take action on competitive strategy and differentiation. The case is hypothetical but based upon patterns observed in many actual cases.

The analysis is generalizable to any context (whether B2B, B2C, nonprofit, product, service, etc.) in which a customer makes a choice among competitive options. Your revenue growth and financial results depend upon bringing the customer's choice your way.

Struggling to grow sales

Very Good Inc. (VGI) is a successful manufacturing concern selling machined parts used as inputs by other manufacturers. VGI is struggling to grow sales for its XT7 Phenom Controller, an established product that has traditionally been a stalwart for the company but that has recently lost steam.

If we were to ask the Very Good senior leadership team to define how the Phenom provides value to its customers, they would answer with factors like the following: product performs every time; low price; service problems fixed immediately.

Let's assume the customer segment includes manufacturing leaders like Jim at customer firm Next Step Corp.

Figure 1 shows two circles that capture value in the market. The circle on the right represents the set of customer Jim's needs. The circle on the left captures Jim's perception of VGI's offering. Let's say that the VGI leadership team assumes that Jim is satisfied with the Phenom on the three factors above. As such, those factors – represented as pins in a Google map – reside in the overlap between the two Figure 1 circles.

quirks.com/articles/2017/20170409.aspx

Figure 1: Very Good Inc. – Overlap with Customer Jim's Needs

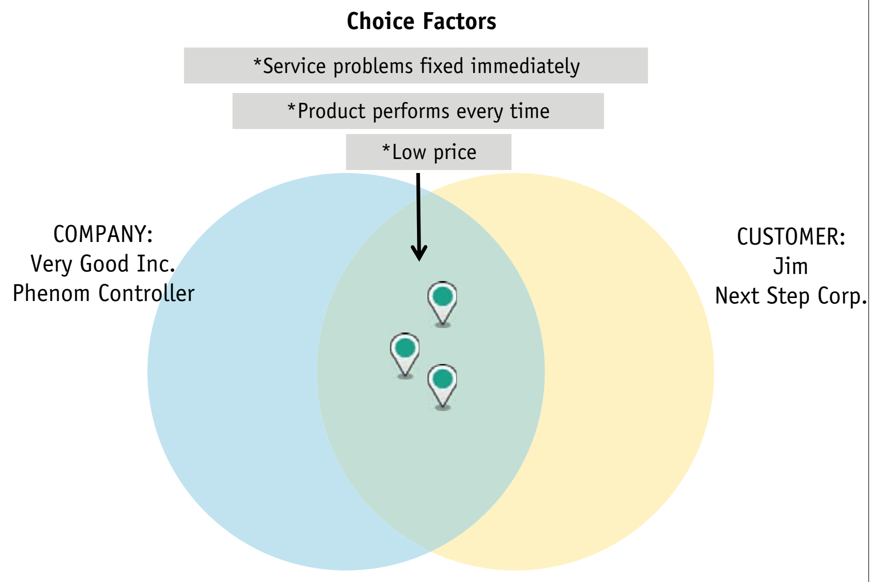
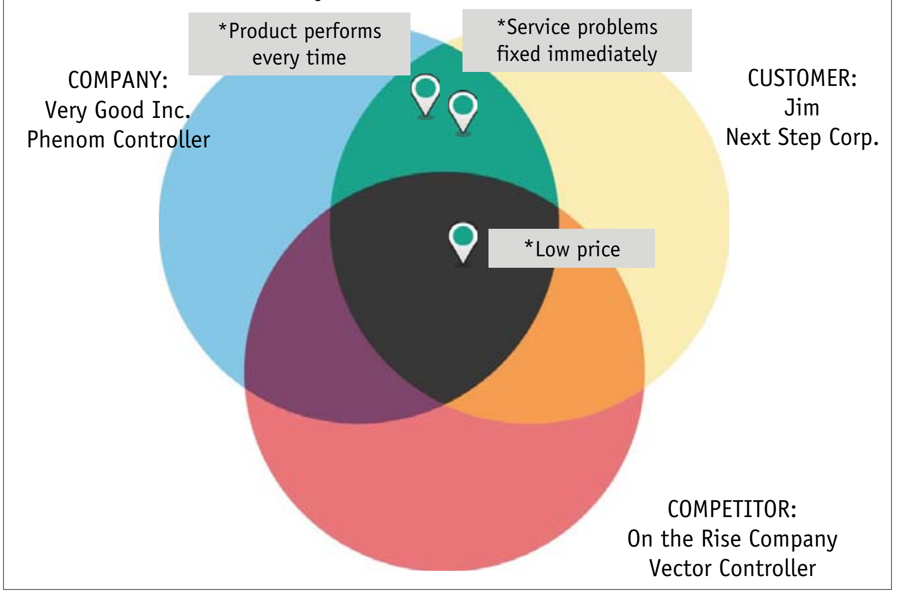


Figure 2: Internal View – Competitive Positions as Perceived by Very Good Inc. Senior Executives



But it's important to note that customer Jim doesn't view VGI in isolation – he chooses between the Phenom and other controller supply options. The fact that Jim chooses is what puts the "competitive" in competitive strategy.

On the Rise Company has an offering called Vector which competes directly with the Phenom. The Very Good executives would admit that "low price" is probably a point of parity between the two rivals but believe that VGI offers distinctive value relative to the rival on the other two factors (Figure 2).

Representing competitive positions via the Venn[1] actually reveals other strategically meaningful concepts. Besides identifying points-of-difference for both VGI (green) and its rival (orange), the Venn diagram captures competitive table stakes or points-of-parity in the middle (gray), unmet customer needs (yellow) and lower-value factors owned by either competitor (blue, red) or common to both (purple). Each of these areas of the Venn can play a role in building growth strategy.

Everyone has a theory

When VGI senior leadership meet to generate strategy for improving sales, everyone in the conference room has a theory for moving forward:

Tom, head of sales: "I think we should lower price to gain share."

Sue, head of finance: "I think we should create a branding campaign around the 'reliable performance' benefit."

Bill, head of marketing: "I think we should promote our service advantage."

The greater the disagreement, the louder the conversation gets. Everyone knows that the loudest voice in the room ultimately wins the day at Very Good Inc.

What if, however, the team were able to gather data to provide direct insight into customer Jim's decision-making and to evaluate the different hypotheses above?

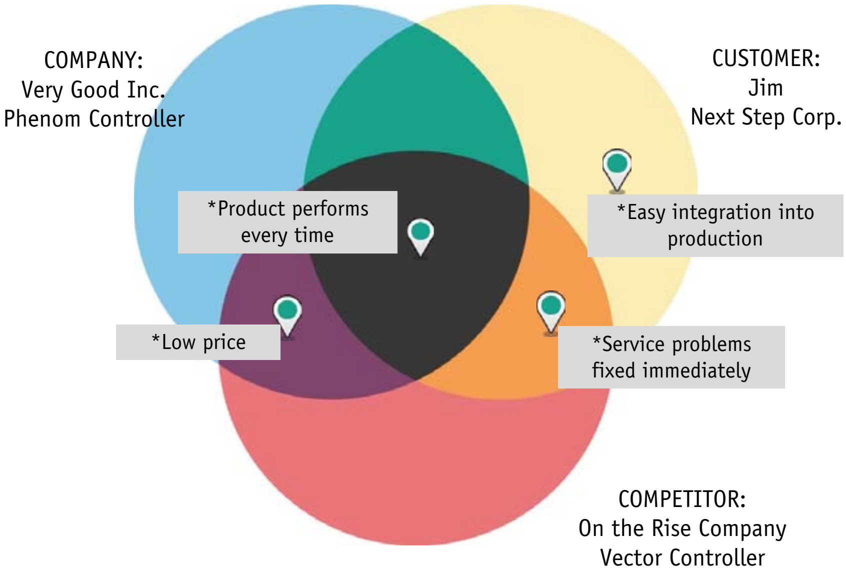
They can. Measuring the perceptions and preferences of a sample of Jims is a relatively straightforward matter applying standard, well-established attitude measures. Categorizing the choice factors into the seven Venn categories requires a sorting logic based upon thresholds for a) importance (lower vs. higher), b) competitive differences (different vs. not) and c) brand performance (above or below expectation).

In fact, the results of a survey to measure customer perceptions survey give us Figure 3. These insights from a representative sample of customer Jims show the reality that is actually driving Very Good's financial performance.

The customers' actual assessments are very different from the Very Good team's expectations. While Very Good once might have been the leader on reliable product and fast service, the situation has changed. Customers believe that VGI's product Phenom is at best at competitive parity on these factors. Worse, the competitor On the Rise is doing something to produce superior service. Price is less important to enough customers that the price pin appears in the purple zone. Seems incredible but this is a common phenomenon, often because customers focus more on nonprice factors in their decisions than you realize.

How is it possible that the team was so far off in predicting customer Jim's perceptions? Actually, it's more than just possible. Such gaps in prediction tend to be the norm rather than the exception. Research in psychology and marketing[2] has shown consistently that

Figure 3: External View – Competitive Positions as Perceived by a Sample of Customer Jims



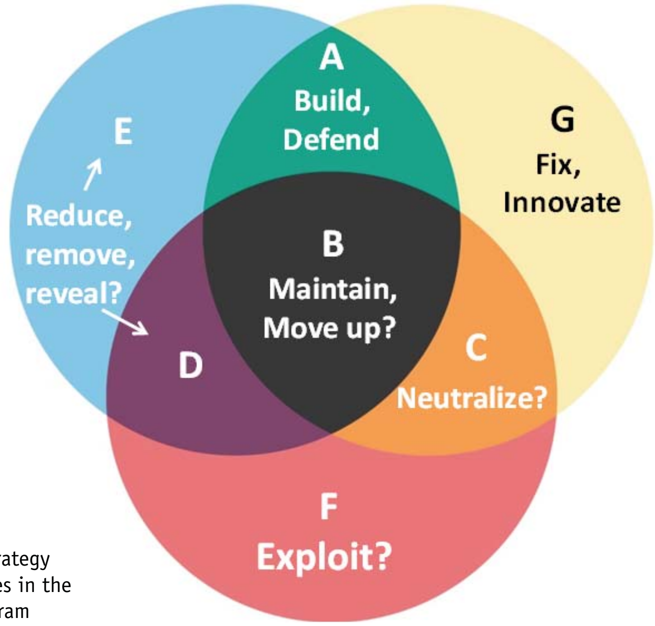


Figure 4:
Growth Strategy Imperatives in the Venn Diagram

Green: Our points-of-difference. Build and defend. Do so around a strategic theme and with unique resources and assets.

Gray/Black: Points-of-parity. Provide the essential parity value (gray/black). Provide the essential table stakes but don't go overboard.

Orange: Competitor points-of-difference. When it is cost-effective, neutralize competitors' advantages. This eliminates reasons why competitors might be chosen and highlights your green.

Yellow: Unmet needs. Solve problems and innovate around unmet needs (yellow). When your green zone is empty, look here.

Blue: Lower-value points-of-difference. Can we stop emphasizing, reduce or even remove these factors? Alternatively, is this potentially important value that has been dormant?

Purple: Lower-value points-of-parity. Same question, although these factors are not believed to differentiate you from the competition.

Red: Lower-value competitor points-of-difference. In a way, pointing out your competitor's differences on unimportant attributes allows you to turn attention to what's really important (e.g., Apple's pounding of the PC in the "I'm a Mac" campaign). There is some risk of such a strategy though – may be better to let sleeping dogs lie.

people have a difficult time predicting others' needs and preferences. This happens because we often project our own needs/beliefs in predicting others' and seek only confirming evidence of those beliefs.

Shocked they didn't predict

The Very Good team was in fact shocked that they didn't predict customer perceptions perfectly – because they regularly talk to customers in sales calls. However, sales interactions may not lend themselves to deep learning about customer needs. Peter Campbell of Nucor Corporation describes it very well: A sales call is often a tennis match in which pleasantries are exchanged, the sales pitch is served up, objections returned and volleys go back and forth to stake out positions. This leaves little opportunity for truly learning customers' current headaches, challenges and needs.

An additional finding from VGI's research is the unexpected, unmet need in the yellow zone: customers express a desire for "easy integration into production," reporting that neither Very Good nor On the Rise delivers effectively. The VGI team was unaware of this concern but it turns out to be very important. The competitor On the Rise knows nothing of this unmet need.

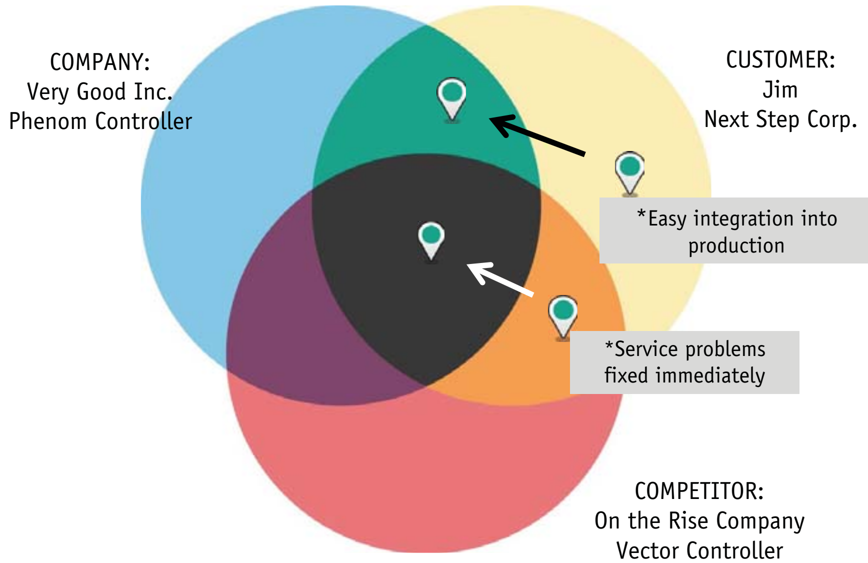
Organized in the Venn categories, the data provide insight beyond traditional studies of attitude or satisfaction. In fact, the Venn categorization allows us to readily evaluate the action proposals from Tom, Sue and Bill:

Should we cut price, as Tom suggests? No way. Prices are at parity and a less important factor for many customers. (Dropping prices would have two downsides: It would raise customer attention to price and away from nonprice benefits, while simultaneously drawing a fast matching response from rival On the Rise.)

Should we follow Sue's advice to build a branding campaign to promote superiority in "reliable performance?" Sue's suggestion is questionable until we figure out why customers believe our superiority has gone away. Either it truly has (have we benchmarked On the Rise's Phenom?) or is this a misperception that needs to be corrected?

How about Bill's idea of promoting our service advantage? This is a

Figure 5: Focused Actions for Very Good Inc.



bad idea in the short term. You can't promote an advantage you don't have. Instead we've got to understand what's driving customer valuations of service. We can determine whether this is a customer misperception or something radical that On the Rise has done to improve its service.

Move the pins

Instead, take informed action that drives and supports differentiation. In other words, move the pins. Upon seeing these data, the Very Good team reduced the volume of their conversation and began to look at the meaning of the Venn diagram zones and the strategy principles they capture.

All competitive strategy frameworks have differentiation at their core. Think Porter, Blue Ocean Strategy, MacMillan and McGrath, Youngme Moon, Wernerfelt's resource-based view of the firm, Osterwalder's business strategy canvas, etc. But at times, the discussion of differentiation underweights the significance of being different from competitors in ways important to customers. What's missing is a systematic method for identifying differentiation that is truly valuable to customers.

Think Volvo (safety), Amazon (everything you need) and Starbucks (third place; home, work, Starbucks) – competitive advantage requires compelling, unique reasons for customers to choose you. The idea is to stay focused on the green.

When an offering is clearly differentiated, the green zone often holds multiple choice factors that thematically make the organization different in important ways. Most companies, though, are operating in the blind about their current differentiation (or lack thereof).

Build and reinforce differentiation

The key to Venn analysis is the bundling of actions that both build and reinforce differentiation. There are different growth imperatives associated with each area of the model (see Figure 4).

Think of strategy as "moving the pins" to create more compelling value for customers to bring their choices your way.

Sometimes communication is enough to move pins. A global pharma firm used Venn analysis to develop new branding and communications programs designed to move two choice factors (efficacy and managed care) that physicians were perceiving incorrectly. These actions contributed to the brand's rise from No. 4 to No. 1 in the category.

Similarly, a small specialty recycling firm serving the steel industry was able to change its sales message to neutralize client questions about its long-term stability, a concern it had been completely unaware of. The actions led to an annual sales bump of 10 percent in a recessionary period, competing against behemoth Waste Management.

Most of the time, though, building differentiation requires more than communication. A Midwestern hospital used Venn analysis to identify several unexpected patient insights about its emergency room services and turned around a slide in ER volume with new staffing, training and a 29-minute service guarantee.

The Catholic Archdiocese in a large southern metropolitan area found that prospective donors to a tax credit-based scholarship program were hesitant about state tax credit paperwork, unclear about deadlines and concerned about leadership commitment to this Catholic school scholarship program. Among other actions, redesign of the paperwork process and communications focused on core green-zone differentiators led to a 70 percent increase in donations.

Sometimes discovery of unmet needs (yellow zone) leads to a whole renovation of strategy. The European division of a major global stock exchange shifted millions of funds out of technology development (purple zone) after discovering a need for greater technology flexibility among senior executives at global investment banks in their work with the Venn model. The firm built an "app store" to give the banks access to third-party developers who were coming up with new ideas every day.

Finally, a global technology platform provider recently used Venn analysis in pulling from the market a product based upon insights indicating significant customer uncertainty about differentiation among platforms for lead-management. After validating these insights with other data, the company concluded that the costs of seeking to differentiate this service (both technically and through communications) far exceeded the benefits and dropped the lead-management product (taking a multimillion-dollar charge in one quarter but substantially improving financial results in the next).

Specific actions to be taken

The leadership team from VGI took a couple of simple slides around the organization. One showed the definition of the Venn areas, the other showed the specific actions to be taken (Figure 5).

Detailed action plans were developed to focus on two initiatives:

Orange to gray: Eliminate the competitor's advantage on speed of service response. Effective service processes was a high priority for customers and VGI had lost its long-ago superior position. The VGI team did a detailed review of current service processes, customer insight about why the competitor was preferred and then updated the information system to more carefully track and close service events.

Yellow to green: Staking claim to an important point of difference. When there's no perceived uniqueness, it's important to find new points-of-difference. The VGI team did a study to break down their customers' manufacturing processes to identify how those processes might be made more efficient. They were able to simplify their controller design to allow it to plug more easily into the customer's process and reduce both time and error. This action has the added benefits of a) providing demonstrable economic value to customer Jim and b) being difficult for the competitor to replicate because it is based upon customer knowledge sourced and owned uniquely by VGI.

Focus time and resources

The value of the analysis above is in helping Very Good Inc. focus its time and resources – something everybody needs today. But it is more than just focusing on the next thing to do. It is the idea of using customer insights to focus on action that will drive the firm's differentiation and bring customers' choices its way.

An added benefit is that the visual nature of the framework makes it easy to present to and engage other team members, who understood both the analysis and the goals behind the action initiatives and contribute to buy-in.

It's possible to push beyond abstract notions of customer-focus and competitive difference for the sake of difference. Combine the two ideas in a measurable way: Build your action plan to ensure you are different from competitors in ways important to customers.

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••• pricing research

Take charge of the fourth P

Why marketing should own pricing

| By Oskar Toerneld and Robin de Rooij

snapshot

The authors outline five pricing-related mistakes and how to avoid them.

Setting the right price is one of the best ways to positively impact a company's bottom line. Yet price-setting is not always top-of-mind, nor is it owned by a single department within a company. This holds true across industries, whether it is consumer goods, health care, telecom, finance or technology. Sometimes marketing takes responsibility for pricing, while other times finance takes on the task. Often, we find there exists no clear pricing strategy at all in companies and thus, no clear ownership of pricing responsibility.

We're all familiar with the four Ps of marketing: product, place, promotion and price. For many of us, it seems natural for marketing to own or at least be involved in the first three but pricing is usually left to other functions. Maybe it's because the first three are a more natural fit for someone with a creative marketing background, while price is seen as more quantitative in nature – more fitting for someone who loves analyzing spreadsheets. Maybe this is the reason it often falls under finance to make decisions on pricing. However, for a pricing strategy to make sense, it has to work for consumers or they will stop buying the product. When this happens, it doesn't matter if a theoretical profit model is being satisfied – focusing on consumers should always drive our decisions, regardless of which P we're talking about. There are three big reasons why marketing and marketing research should get involved and take ownership of that last P of marketing.

1. Market research has the pulse of the market, particularly in terms of how to talk to consumers. Pricing is part of brand communication and it has to be in sync with the rest of the message. We can't communicate luxury in our advertising and price at a discount or, perhaps even more risky, communicate value and charge a premium. While the temptation might be to let profitability restrictions dictate how the product is priced, it's important to also take into account how consumers would react to a price or change in price. Ad hoc research is often necessary to gauge how consumers might respond when launching new products or when predicting what

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might happen to consumer interest when you increase price. While mark-ups and profit margins might help calculate theoretical profitability, it doesn't say anything about whether consumers will continue to buy your product or choose to switch to a better-priced competitor.

2. Building on the first point, more retail sales are moving to online and the online environment is changing a lot faster than traditional brick and mortar. All decisions have to be made quicker, including how products are being priced. Digital and real-time conditions are driving real-time pricing moves. Pricing decisions should be made by the people who observe and understand the digital consumer and no one understands this consumer better than marketing. Access to big data, better and more intuitive analytics tools and marketing's ownership of other monitoring tools such as Web traffic and social media means that marketing is able to constantly tap into the experiences of consumers.

3. Finally, marketing becomes a team of heroes, as taking control of pricing will turn marketing into a profit center. All the other Ps require risks and often fail to yield high returns. Optimized pricing can make a tremendous positive impact, especially when you're in a highly competitive market. Big data analysis has become the backbone of contemporary pricing over the last five years. That said, modeling prices based on historic data alone is not sufficient. Customer opinions still matter and these can be obtained through any number of means, such as customer panels, surveys and even mobile phone apps. Combining traditional and contemporary pricing methods will yield insights that represent the best of both worlds.

It is of course important to tap into the expertise of all the functions in a company and it is important to do the back-end calculations to ensure that products are profitable at the price at which they're being sold. There is a solid case to be made for having marketing take the lead in order to drive a pricing strategy that puts consumers first in order to drive an overall cohesive strategy.

Markets have changed

A product portfolio can contain many items addressing a diverse collection of consumer needs. Some products perform well, others less so. Many times, markets have changed since a portfolio was put together and the strategy was outlined. And pricing changes have likely occurred in the category – perhaps driven by changes in the cost of goods.

Because markets are constantly changing, brands are reevaluating constantly, adapting portfolio strategies to maintain financial goals and positioning. Portfolio adjustments can have short-term and long-term consequences, so addressing all options, along with the pros and cons to each, is necessary to finding the best option. Marketers have a unique point of view within the organization and their insight is absolutely necessary for making smart pricing decisions. Here are some common strategic pitfalls that marketers can help brands avoid making:

Mistake #1: Becoming over-reliant on trade promotion. Trade promotion is one of the largest drivers of volume in most fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) categories. In moderation, trade can be incredibly useful. It can be quickly activated (especially temporary price reductions) and it often drives significant volume peaks. It is very visible and because it is so close to the point of sale, it creates the feeling of a strong link between execution and sales. However, there are risks.

Consumers may adjust to a sustained promotion price and expect it to continue, causing some to revolt when prices return to "normal." Trade volume can be much less incremental than it appears at first. The promo product may see a strong lift in sales while being promoted but it often comes by stealing volume from other products from within the same portfolio. This can downtrade consumers from higher-priced tiers and discourage them from returning. Another deceiving source of lift may come from consumers stocking up on sale items, driving a short-term bump that takes away from future volume.

Addiction to pricing promotions can train consumers not to purchase until the product is on deal. The promotion becomes the de facto price. While it's difficult to predict the long-term effect of promotions using models, experienced marketers know that it can bite brands down the road.

Mistake #2: Cutting off the incremental assortment tail. Removing poorly-performing products from a portfolio makes room for new and innovative products on the shelf. However, the temptation is often to define performance by sales rate and overlook how incremental the product is to the rest of the portfolio.

It's usually a better strategy to delist the SKUs whose volume is most likely to flow back to the rest of the portfolio. For example, if you have two very similar products in your portfolio, delisting one of them is likely to shift sales to the other one, the assumption being that both products fulfill the needs of the same consumers.

Most marketers are cognizant of the fact that adding a close-in line extension doesn't gain a new audience; it largely cannibalizes the base business. What some overlook, however, is that incrementality is equally at play when delisting. Delisting a close-in line extension would have most customers flowing back to the base business. On the other hand, discontinuing a small but incremental platform would be costly and may result in losing consumers to competitors or from the category entirely.

Mistake #3: Ignoring price thresholds. A brand risks losing sales when a price is raised and when that price crosses a certain threshold. This psychological barrier is why many brands price at $1.99 rather than $2.00. This is relatively straightforward and intuitive to marketers. However, it is easy to overlook the context of competitive pricing. There is absolute price and then there is your price compared to your competitors'; the difference is the "gap."

No brand exists in a vacuum. In order for it to make sense for the retailer to execute a strategy, one has to consider the entire category not just a single brand alone. If a brand is considering implementing a new strategy, it must consider the impact that it leaves on the overall category. For example, increasing the price of a top seller might drive margin while sacrificing some unit sales. Increasing price too much might actually lead to fewer consumers even walking down the aisle, hurting sales for the entire category. Before implementing a strategy, take a step back and consider the potential side effects.

Mistake #4: Forgetting who stands between you and your customer. CPG manufacturers often invest a great deal of time, money and resources building smart portfolio optimization and then fail to consider their retailers' priorities. When a manufacturer does pricing research, it too often thinks of the end customer as the customer – forgetting that the retailer is a key stakeholder standing in between. When that happens, you've just spent a lot of time strategizing around a model that is ultimately irrelevant.

A brand must consider how the changes to its portfolio impact the overall category for the retailer. If one is able to create a scenario that benefits both one's own franchise as well as the overall category, it is more likely the retailer will implement your suggestion.

This is especially challenging in developing markets, where distribution can be highly fragmented, with a lot privately-owned mini-market or provision stores. In this case, the brand needs to anticipate how retailers are likely to set their prices based on the price they pay. Keeping in mind that typical pricing strategies of small retailers may be to offer products at easy, rounded price points. A seemingly small price increase to the retailer at the wrong time can result in unintended drastic price increases to the consumer.

Mistake #5: Changing size without really considering value. In the eyes of the consumer, less is usually less. But sometimes it feels like more. Conventional wisdom tells us that any downsize without lowering price can leave people feel shortchanged. But sometimes a profit-enhancing "downsize" can be framed as beneficial to the consumer, such as with convenience sizes.

Downsizing without considering the price/value proposition can lead to unexpected consumer backlash, especially if the change is visibly noticeable. It's tempting to downsize in the hope that it's less obvious to consumers than a price change. It also allows the product to stay within its promoted price group, simplifying implementation. At best, you risk consumers noticing the loss in value that comes from getting less product for the same price. At worst, customers may feel like they've been cheated.

However, if the brand is able to downsize while adding some other value to the consumer experience, customers may be happy to pay extra for the added benefits. Within the snacking category, convenience packs often carry a higher price-per-pound than their corresponding base items. However, they provide benefits such as being easier to pack in a lunch bag or maintaining freshness for longer, so consumers happily pay the premium.

This phenomenon is not limited to only the snack foods industry; coffee pods and devices are a popular trend despite costing many times more per serving than ordinary coffee grounds. The significant convenience factor of having a hot cup of coffee at the push of a button helps to justify the price differential.

For a pricing strategy to make sense, it has to work for consumers. The best way to ensure success is to make sure marketing has a seat at the table when portfolio decisions are made.

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Want to know what's ahead for marketing research? Meet some of the individuals and teams who have the experience and perspective to understand the factors driving change in the industry and the skill sets and knowledge to navigate the future direction of the insights function.

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Global B2B market research specialists

MATTHEW HARRISON
CEO, B2B INTERNATIONAL

B2B International is the largest B2B-focused market research firm. The group is led by Matthew Harrison, who established the Beijing, New York and Düsseldorf offices, resulting in substantial growth over the years. Harrison is widely published, has spoken at numerous conferences and has advised over 100 large companies on business opportunities.

Harrison's focus is on B2B International's key differentiators: the deep industry knowledge that comes with the company's extensive B2B experience and the international expertise given the firm's global footprint and 100+ countries researched every year.

B2B International's commitment to helping B2B brands be more successful is evidenced by its clients outperforming the stock market by almost 20 percent. Under Harrison's leadership, B2B International has doubled in size every few years.

Having conducted 3,000+ B2B research studies, B2B International's experience spans various sectors from heavy industry to financial and business services. The company provides a range of research services that give B2B brands a competitive edge.

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Leading incentive solutions

JONATHAN PRICE, CEO

Virtual Incentives (VI) has been partnering with leading market research firms since 2008 to provide incentive solutions proven to increase respondent engagement and drive response rates in both qualitative and quantitative studies. Through the VI incentive technology platform, you can focus on your research respondents' experience with access to the tools to provide what they want in their research incentive – personalization and relevancy, choice and instant gratification through virtual, mobile delivery. When you provide immediate, convenient and meaningful incentives to your respondents, you create quality research results.

Much of today's research is conducted on-the-go, and today's prospective respondents have short attention spans, busy lifestyles and expect immediate gratification. By tying the VI advanced incentive platform into your research projects, you are able to meet the demands of your respondent, delivering the reward they want, when they want it, on any device – with instant delivery.

Virtual Incentives is the leading provider of virtual Visa® and MasterCard® accounts as well as e-gift cards from more than 600 merchants around the world to meet the needs of both your domestic and international research projects. By simplifying order and delivery processes, the incentive solutions available are cost-effective, flexible and completely customizable.

Jonathan Price has led Virtual Incentives to develop premiere digital incentive programs to help market research companies connect with respondents in ever-evolving ways. Throughout his career, Jonathan has focused on client relationship management, teamwork and success through thought leadership and taking risks.

Under Jonathan's leadership, VI has become a key partner in the market research industry by driving the agile development of a platform that goes far beyond the typical, mechanical, pedestrian delivery of incentives. Jonathan has developed an API that offers end-to-end service that is faster, personalized and offers multiple points of engagements. By continuing to be responsive to the latest trends in the industry, and focus on the respondent, Virtual Incentives and Jonathan Price will continue to be the go-to partner for incentivizing research studies.

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Expertise in online sample

MATHIJS DE JONG, CEO OF P2SAMPLE

As a Co-founder, CEO and Developer of P2Sample, Mathijs is an innovative leader within the market research industry who is on a mission to elevate the concept of research itself, set new industry standards and lead paths through technological and programmatic evolution. His knowledge and work have mastered the use of technology and data-driven solutions to deliver high-quality research results while simultaneously increasing participant satisfaction and unparalleled user experience.

At the heart of the P2Sample development team, Mathijs drives change from within the company in addition to working externally with clients and trusted industry partners. He has developed and implemented proprietary profiling and routing technologies in use within P2Sample's operations that promote strong user engagement for research respondents. In parallel, his team has developed an agile, programmatic quality score system that delivers high data quality that allows the company's clients to drive truly actionable insights.

Recently, while partnering with both BrainJuicer and ZappiStore, Mathijs and his global team set new industry benchmarks by delivering over 7,000 completes addressing the effectiveness of Super Bowl 51 commercials. Spread across 75 real-time projects, this large volume of completions had to be executed with roughly 15 minutes in field and on a rolling basis throughout the live event.

His global background enables him to work with an international team spread across four continents to deliver both high client satisfaction and the best respondent experience for panelists. Working to support both audiences drives Mathijs and his team to develop a product that is agile, fluid and enriched with data. He strives to lead the industry by changing survey experience and increasing quality in surveys for all parties involved.

"We're not just a team of research wonks or developers, we're community evangelists that use technology to deliver an unparalleled sampling and survey experience to both our clients and our panelists. At P2Sample, we believe that respondent engagement and satisfaction is paramount to data quality."

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Fieldwork entrepreneurs

KATE ALBERT, CHICAGO-O'HARE; DENISE AMBROSE, SAN FRANCISCO; MICHELLE BOREA, NETWORK-INTERNATIONAL; KAMI CELANO, LA-ORANGE COUNTY; NIKKI DARRÉ, DENVER; DENICE DUNCAN-FOLDERY, MINNEAPOLIS; BECKY HARRISON, FORT LEE, N.J.; JESSICA JOSSET, DALLAS; KATE KROHN, ATLANTA; CHRISTINE LALLY, BOSTON; RYKER LAMMERS, SEATTLE; CRYSTAL MARTINEZ, WEBWORK AND ANYWHERE; KARYN PICCHIOTTI, CHICAGO-SCHAUMBURG AND NRC; MEGAN POLLARD, CHICAGO-DOWNTOWN AND NETWORK US; CLAY TURNER, PHOENIX

Fieldwork's greatest innovation was made at the inception of our company over 35 years ago: an entrepreneurial structure. Each Fieldwork facility and service has its own president and each president has part ownership of their operation. The result has been uncompromising quality and pride in our service and a spirit of collaboration across all Fieldwork entities.

Entrepreneurship means decisions are made at the local level. You don't need to go to "corporate" to find the person in charge, you can talk to them on-site. Entrepreneurship means changes and innovations in operations can happen immediately. Local entities are not just encouraged to think out-of-the box for better strategies, they are incentivized to do so.

Fieldwork entrepreneurs share their new ideas and innovations with each other at our numerous meetings and summits throughout the year. And Fieldworkers love to share. Our meetings are packed with shared ideas, learning and fun, and we have them at every level of the company, from the founding partners to the recruiting crews. We especially value having our clients join us during these meetings to get more insight into how we are doing and how we can improve. We believe in face-to-face research!

We invite you to come join us at one of our team events. If you would like to see pictures and bios of all of our entrepreneurs, you can find them at www.fieldwork.com/entrepreneurs.

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"We founded Full Circle to do panel differently."

ADAM WEINSTEIN AND NATE LYNCH CO-FOUNDERS/CO-CEOS FULL CIRCLE RESEARCH CO.

By 2013, online research had overcome early bumps to become an accepted, if not even preferred, methodology. But there remained a disturbing disconnect between researcher suppliers and sample providers. We knew we could bridge that gap. We knew we could do it better than what we had seen to date. And we were right.

Today, Full Circle is every bit of what we had envisioned. Our foundation is still based on three equally significant components: build the right product; hire high-level employees; and leverage technology to eliminate traditional restraints.

Building our product was easy. We had already spent years understanding how best to acquire panelists as well as make them feel comfortable within our environment. We had already established relationships with Web site partners. And we were experienced in security and validation, pairing a proprietary internal system with well-known products in the field. Our result is higher-quality data that yields higher-quality insights.

As for our employees, we made a commitment to only hire 10+-year vets. Ones with experience that covers operations through sales and online sample through full-service. This is the only way to serve as true consultants to our clients. To make sure that our clients are always speaking with someone who knows what they're talking about.

Our employees would also be afforded a freedom hard to find elsewhere. Virtual offices do exactly what we thought they would: attract high-functioning, self-motivated professionals who are driven to succeed because it benefits themselves as much as us and the clients Full Circle serves.

We love that what we do differently is what's made us successful. We help our clients on a different level. We work as partners instead of as order-takers. We don't deliver what others call a commodity — we provide real, usable insights that make a difference.

And we're still right.

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Comprehensive translation partner

NANCY HERNON, CEO

G3 has been partnering with the market research and insights industry as a comprehensive translation partner for more than 12 years. Through this laser-focused specialization, the company has the deepest understanding of how translation plugs into all your MR projects.

G3 works in 500 language combinations with hand-selected linguists – who, in addition to translation, evaluate visuals and other cultural aspects for relevancy. The G3 team is highly responsive, with a commitment that has earned Preferred Vendor Status with many Fortune 500 companies, including leading MR firms. And the human component of G3 is augmented with various workflow technologies thereby lowering costs and time while ensuring quality.

About G3 Translate's CEO Nancy Hernon

Nancy Hernon's passion for language, innovation and giving a global voice to clients has led her to a career in the translation industry spanning nearly 20 years. She takes special pride in G3's success in the MR field, where the company has partnered on nearly 15,000 study translations for clients, spanning 135 countries. She also holds a Professional Researcher Certification from the Insights Association, serves on their Southwest board and sits on their national Standards and Ethics Committee.

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Qualitative behavioral expert

BARBARA GASSAWAY, CEO, THE RESEARCH GROUP

Over 15 years of creative market research experience among clinicians and patients in the health care and pharmaceutical industries. A differentiator appreciated by colleagues is Barbara's comprehensive understanding of strategic marketing principles, along with current trends and best practices in qualitative behavioral sciences. She is expert in managing client teams, project priorities and creatively implementing methodologies to inform and drive effective decisions.

"Have you ever met someone so full of grace, quiet intelligence and good humor that you stop everything and just listen to them in awestruck reverence? The breadth of her wisdom is remarkable. If you ever seek a market research consultant, Barbara should be your first and last contact."
- Andrew Rose, Zest Media Solutions

Contributing author to industry journals, RIVA Trainer and mentor to many, Barbara's commitment to improving the market research industry is heartfelt.

A loyal client refers to Barbara as the rock star of moderators.

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Business-to-business visionaries

JARED SCHIERS, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT, GLOBAL ACCESS, SUPPLY & ENGAGEMENT AT SSI

After 40 years in market research, SSI has access to the largest panel of verified B2B and B2C respondents. Since 2014, they have been especially focused on building B2B sample and currently have over 2 million panelists.

Jared Schiers is an industry expert in finding and engaging with research participants across the globe – defining online respondent engagement techniques and best practices with the company for two decades. "Researching professional audiences can be challenging," says Schiers. "Gaining verified, accurate results about B2B audiences can be limited by the lack of quality B2B sample currently available in the marketplace."

SSI provides a fresh, innovative approach to accessing business opinions. Jared and his dedicated B2B team are working to leverage the company's extensive sample reach to deliver the targets that are important to their customers. Schiers manages all aspects of respondent engagement across sample sources, including: the digital experience within the research process; designing cutting-edge quality controls and fraud-prevention techniques; implementing meaningful, relevant and diverse rewards programs; and providing appropriate information and community services to millions of online respondents.

"Not all B2B samples are created equal – whether our customers are researching digital marketing, information technology, software, C-suite, SBO, NGO or other professionals," Schiers says. "Our unique multimode access to mobile, online and CATI data collection give our customers the options they need to ensure their audience can be reached and their project completed."

SSI maintains the highest verification and profiling standards across the fastest-growing B2B sample in the world. They source from qualified business panels, loyalty programs, associations, integrated partnerships and profiled consumer panels.

"Our investment in people and technology over the last few years has allowed us to offer an uncompromising level of speed and service," says Schiers. "This has enabled us to deliver the highest levels of value and satisfaction to our customers."

Contact SSI today to help you target the right B2B professionals for your next project.

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Leader in data collection

NAN CANALETICH, NATIONAL SALES DIRECTOR AT C&C RESEARCH

Craig Cunningham, president, and Cindy Cunningham, vice president, started the business 25 years ago and, along with Nan Canaletich, national sales director, continue to lead the company to new heights.

We are the largest privately-owned and -operated data collection company in the U.S. and have remained a leader in today's marketplace through hard work, ingenuity and a dedication to quality.

C&C Market Research is the complete answer to all of your data collection needs.

Our management team currently oversees 47 field locations geographically dispersed across the United States; approximately 65 percent of the offices are equipped with focus and viewing rooms for qualitative research projects. We also have the ability to work on all different kinds of sensory-related market research projects. From projects with light prep to projects with full kitchen prep including ovens and ranges – we have experience across the board.

In addition to our facility capabilities, we also have experience with various research projects from large quantitative copy tests, to small qualitative focus groups, to HUTS and IHUTS, to medical testing and many other research projects.

Our corporate team is dedicated to ensuring your project is a success from beginning to end. Once a project has been commissioned to C&C, an experienced project manager is assigned to manage the day-to-day operations of the project. By having multiple C&C team members watching all projects we ensure the highest level of quality and communication we can.

Our corporate team, local staff and facilities, coupled with our proprietary programming and data transmission capabilities, have ensured countless successful projects for all our clients. Give C&C a call so we can work together to make your next project a huge success.

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Consumer research visionary

FRÉDÉRIC-CHARLES PETIT, CEO, TOLUNA

Toluna CEO Frédéric-Charles Petit: a Visionary in consumer research, founder of the company that's reimagining the digital insights technology industry

Frédéric-Charles Petit launched Toluna in 2000 with a sense that brands and consumers can engage with one another to truly revolutionize how consumer insights are generated. Petit introduced the concept of an online social voting community, where consumers can engage with one another, post polls, pose questions and more. This community, Toluna.com, is now the world's largest social voting community, more than 15 years after its launch and helps ensure that research is truly real-time.

When Petit founded Toluna, it was a one-man operation. Now Toluna is a more than 1200-person corporation with more than 10% of staff in R&D, driving innovation. Frédéric's vision for the future of the industry comes to life through investments in technology, research and development and innovation of new products as ways to get research professionals actionable insights, faster than ever before.

"The market research industry is kind of being flipped on its head at this point," Petit says. "Technology has made it really imperative for companies to deliver quickly and at very low cost. One of the things we have done to date and we're thankful that we have is invested ahead of the curve."

Frédéric's vision is to transform the industry into one that is more agile, faster and offers deeper insight into the ever-changing consumer in a social and tech-driven landscape. This means offering new and better technologies that automate traditional research processes, offer additional layers of data (like behavioral) and provide actionable results that can make real impact on business issues in real-time.

Petit has his sights set on the digitalization of market research as a means to keep Toluna moving forward – and there's no stopping him now.

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The growth guru

KRISTIN LUCK, LUCK COLLECTIVE

Kristin Luck's consulting practice, Luck Collective, focuses on nontraditional growth strategies born out of her over 20 years of experience as a marketing research and start-up expert. She's a serial entrepreneur and a globetrotting keynote speaker on marketing, branding, start-ups and data-driven innovation and is consistently ranked as one of the top 100 sales and branding experts to follow on Twitter.

As a three-time successful entrepreneur, Luck understands firsthand the demands and distractions faced by business owners. Luck has led, served and consulted for many high-growth businesses in the U.S., U.K., Europe and Asia-Pacific in most every capacity – research analyst, client manager, operations, technical product development, strategy, sales and marketing. So she brings a perspective to growth strategy that transcends sales and marketing. Luck works with firms to optimize efforts and calibrate teams for growth that's both immediate and sustainable.

From distribution to acquisition, or from Amsterdam to Austin, her approach is about mastering the shift (even if it's a pivot) from one stage of business growth to the next. Luck isn't just a strategy consultant or a sales consultant. She's a whatever-it-takes business transformation and expansion coach. With her firsthand, road-tested, multinational experience and a data-driven approach to learning and refining, she quickly creates the right conditions for immediate and sustainable business growth.

Luck is also the founder of Women In Research (WIRe), the only nonprofit solely focused on the advancement of women in market research. With over 5,000 community members globally, WIRe arms women in the marketing research industry with the tools to develop professionally, build connections and stay inspired. WIRe's mission is to advance the contributions and voice of women in research, both for themselves and the greater good of the industry. You can connect with WIRe at www.womeninresearch.org.

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13 TOP MOBILE RESEARCH COMPANIES

These days, everyone is doing everything on their mobile devices. We can shop, check social media and send e-mails, all in the palm of our hands. As we continue to rely on our smartphones, it's essential that marketing research is available on these devices as well.

Mobile devices offer a valuable way to reach a wide variety of audiences for marketing research. Companies that specialize in mobile research can help you optimize your research, allowing consumers to participate in research wherever they are: at home, giving researchers a glimpse into their everyday lives; at the store, giving insight into their shopping behaviors and purchases; or wherever respondents are in the real world, available to give their opinion and insight for your surveys and studies. Many of the techniques used in research can be optimized for mobile, including surveys, diaries, videos and even eye-tracking. Plus, mobile devices can be carried anywhere, allowing respondents to give their insight at any time. When you need to conduct mobile research, or need help optimizing your research for mobile, consider these companies.

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Civicom Marketing Research Services

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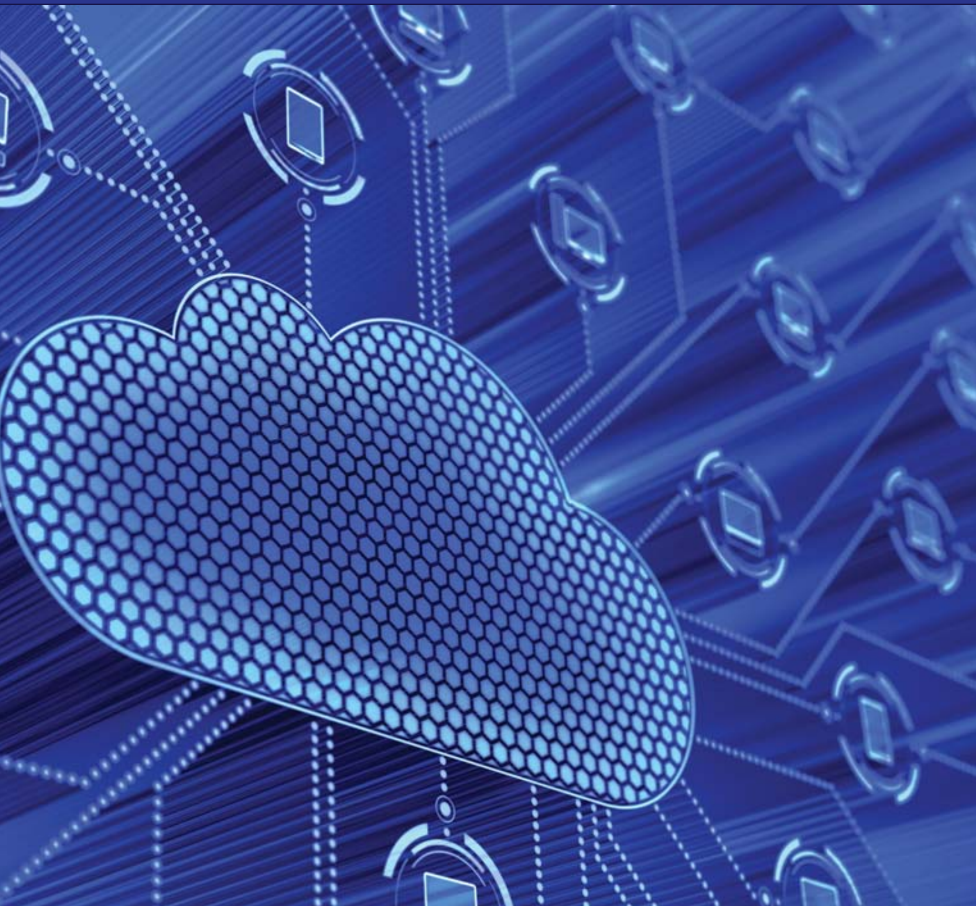
Rebecca West, Global VP, Marketing Research Services

Civicom ThoughtLight™ is a qualitative mobile app for collecting richer in-the-moment insights, including geolocation plus offline accessibility for locations without a data connection. Set up multiple activities for respondents to reply to by video, audio, photos and/or



text. Use it for shopper insights, audio diaries, patient journeys or any project where you need in-the-moment, on-the-spot data collection using smartphones. View responses sorted by respondent. Combine ThoughtLight™ with our powerful analytics tools to generate coded excerpts, word clouds, charts and graphs. We program your discussion guide, set up your respondents, send respondent notifications and provide live moderator support 24/7.

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

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Founded 2008 | 15 employees
Ofer Heijmans, CEO

Dooblo - the “Gold Standard” of tablet CAPI platforms - is being used today to power field surveys on Android tablets by leading research firms such as Nielsen, Ipsos, GfK, Gallup and over 700 different customers in over 80 different countries. In 2016 alone, Dooblo processed over 20 million interviews. Dooblo takes care of your mission-critical face-to-face projects with full offline support and best-of-its-kind quality control system featuring automatic GPS tracking, silent voice, photo and video recordings and a predictive interview flagging system. Dooblo’s pay-per-interview pricing and unlimited trial means you can be up and running with your CAPI project today!

Phone 972-9-7674937
www.dooblo.com

Informed Decisions Group, Inc.

Founded 2004 | 13 employees
Colin Valdiserri, CEO

Informed Decisions Group, Inc. is a full-service behavioral insights firm specializing in shopper insights, visual sciences and conversion measurement. IDG has innovated mobile eye-tracking solutions for shelf insights, packaging and menu board optimization for over a decade. For complete mobility, our life-sized 3-D virtual aisle is portable to anywhere in the world. Being able to leverage our solutions in any location affords our clients the ability to measure visual, emotional and conversion behavior in any market or scenario. From in-store and focus group facilities to QSR dining rooms and drive-thrus, IDG’s advantage is measuring real-world behavior where consumers exhibit that behavior.

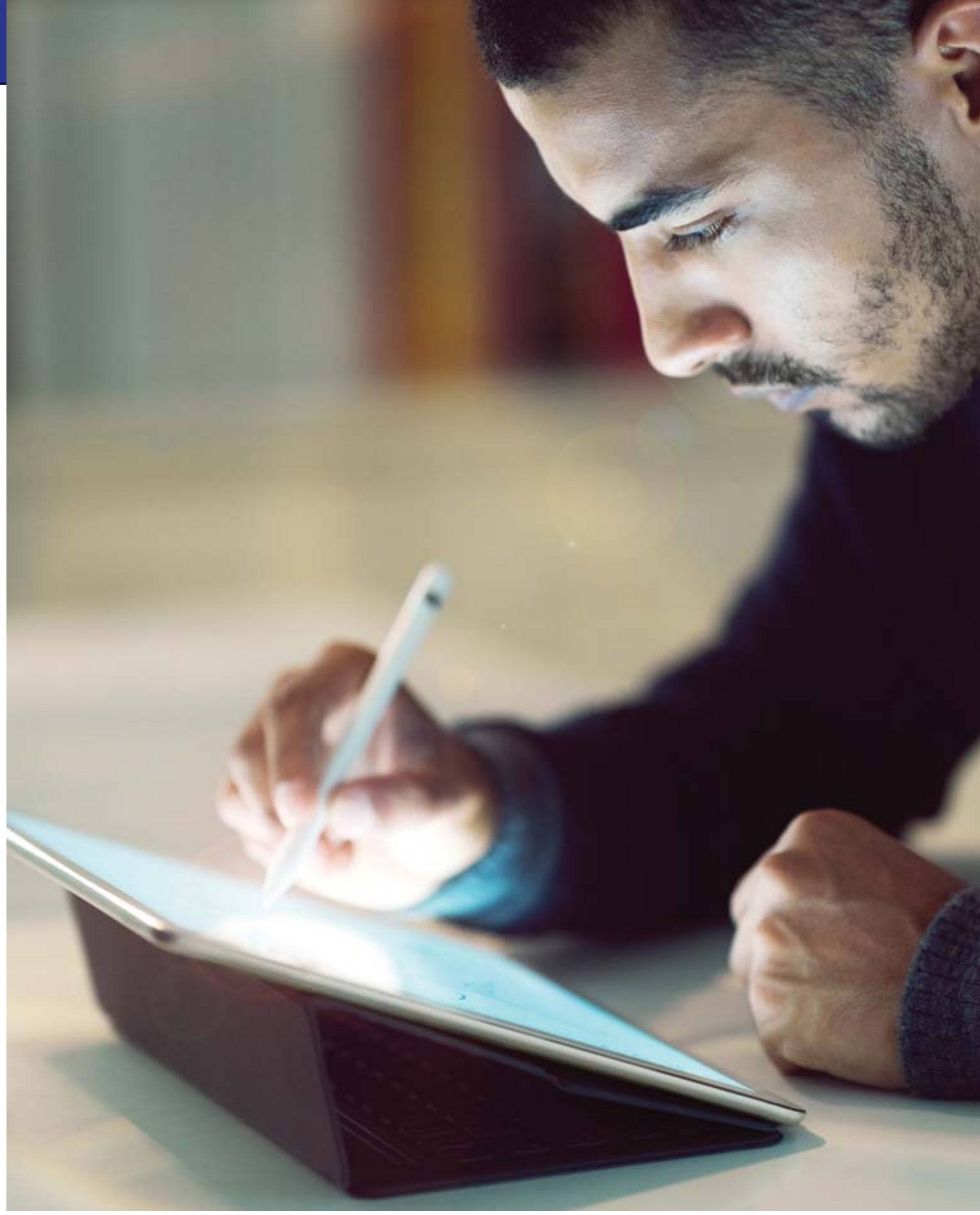
Phone 440-454-0399
www.idg-consulting.com

Netquest

Founded 2001 | 264 employees
Germán Loewe, CEO and Founder

Netquest is the No. 1 provider of opinion and digital behavior data in the market research sector in Latin America, Spain and Portugal. We count on more than 10 years of experience in creating representative panels of the population, being the only company in the region to be certified with the ISO 26362 standard, specific for online access panels. Thanks to our cross-device technology, we are the only company capable of offering integrated information about the consumer. We offer all kinds of specialized services related to samples, observational samples, programming and data processing and all our services are mobile-optimized.

Phone 860-266-7434
www.netquest.com



P2Sample

Founded 2010 | 55+ employees
Mathijs de Jong, Co-founder and CEO

P2Sample offers a strong mobile survey presence, with proprietary Android and iOS mobile apps that offer respondents a seamless survey experience on the go. In addition to mobile surveys, we offer in-house cross-platform survey programming utilizing the Decipher survey platform. Cross-platform surveys ensure our panelists can participate via the platform or device of their choice, at their convenience. We pride ourselves on our agility to provide both exceptional sampling and unique internal routing technology. Our bids and operations teams work around the clock to deliver sample for 150+ countries for our clients.

Phone 404-446-2720
www.p2sample.com

PREDIQT

Founded 2014 | Less than 10 employees
Henry Chan, CEO

PREDIQT monitors, analyzes and reports mobile activity to provide market research firms and brands with actionable consumer insight. The world is going mobile and companies no longer possess the necessary tools to accurately monitor "in-the-moment" mobile consumer behavior. PREDIQT provides these tools. In contrast to traditional "stated" data from unreliable surveys and diaries, we uncover "revealed" user activity from actual mobile behavior such as texting, browsing, searches and app usage. PREDIQT's consumer insight engine provides actual products and prices being viewed by mobile shoppers. In addition, PREDIQT is developing technologies to monitor chat bot activity and video viewing activity.

Phone 917-892-0748
www.prediqt.co

Secret Shopper

Founded 1990 | 50 employees
Paul F. Ryan, CEO

At Secret Shopper® our expertise is evaluating the customer experience both in the digital and brick-and-mortar worlds. We provide multiple levels of cutting-edge mobile research services to accommodate any kind of business need. With over 25 years of experience conducting on-site evaluations, we have the shoppers in place to get the job done promptly as well. Our in-house IT group can create and develop innovative mobile apps that are easy to navigate and read on any mobile device to meet any business objective. Our Minneapolis-based technical support team prides itself on having provided world-class customer service over the years. Check us out at www.secretshopper.com.

Phone 763-525-1460
www.secretshopper.com

SoapBoxSample

Founded 2012 | 39 employees
Jacqueline Rosales, Chief of Operations

From ideation to optimization, we conduct research for new product development, branding/advertising testing, creative optimization and concept/product testing. Leveraging a combination of in-house research capabilities, SoapBoxSample, a member of the ISA family of companies, is an all-encompassing market research firm focusing on a 360-degree view of the customer. Our offerings include: community insights platform (icanmakeitbetter); mobile research (geofencing, geotargeting, mobile missions and passive metering via our app MySoapBox Meter); data collection (online and traditional); and full research design and analytics.

Phone 855-SOAPBOX
www.soapboxsample.com

SSI (Survey Sampling International)

Founded 1977
Chris Fanning, President and CEO

Celebrating 40 years in business, SSI is the premier global provider of data solutions and technology for consumer and business-to-business survey research. SSI reaches participants in 90+ sample countries via Internet, telephone, mobile/wireless and mixed-access offerings. SSI staff operates from 40 offices and remote staff in over 20 countries, offering sample, data collection, CATI, questionnaire design consultation, programming and hosting, online custom reporting and data processing. SSI's employees serve more than 3,500 customers worldwide.

Phone 203-567-7200
www.surveysampling.com

SIS International Research

Founded 1984 | 75 employees
Ruth Stanat, CEO

SIS International Research is a global market research and strategic market intelligence company providing full-service qualitative and quantitative mobile research, fieldwork, data collection and strategy research. Our mobile research solutions include online ethnography, online diaries,

online bulletin boards, online concept testing, mobile journaling, surveys, mobile apps and hybrid research methods. Our services include recruitment, project management, fieldwork, data collection, interviewing, analysis and reporting. SIS also conducts full-service qualitative and quantitative research nationwide and worldwide. Our headquarters is located in New York and our other key regional offices include London, Frankfurt, Shanghai, Tokyo and Manila.

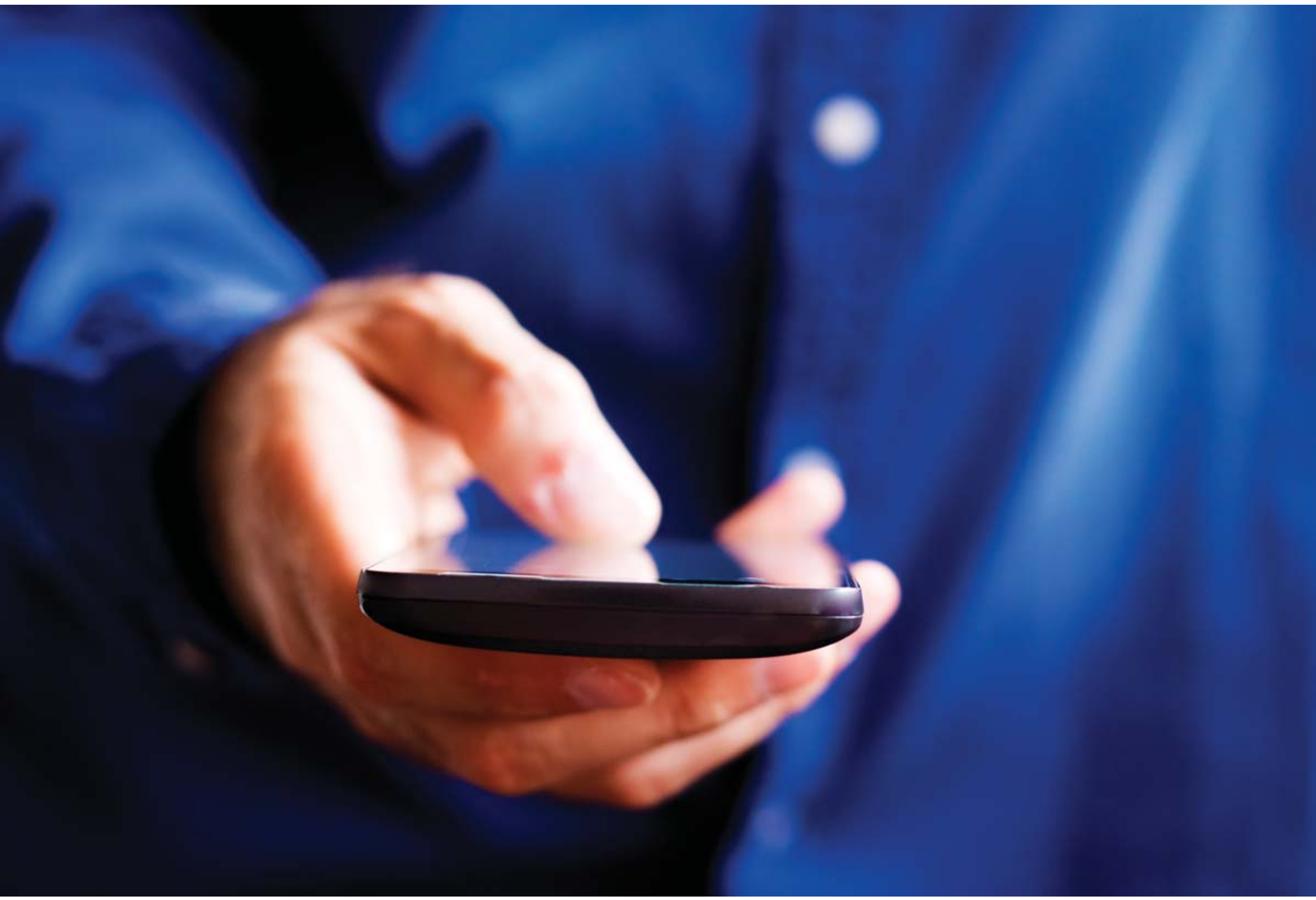
Phone 212-505-6805
www.sismarketresearch.com

Voxco, Inc.

Founded 1976 | 65 employees
Raymond Cyr, President and CEO

Voxco offers the most flexible multichannel survey tools in the industry, including two solutions for reaching mobile respondents: Voxco Online Web surveys engage respondents on mobile devices with flexible formatting, multimedia and a ton of advanced question types. Voxco Mobile Offline is optimized for face-to-face personal interviewing projects. An intuitive survey app backed up with robust project management, including advanced interviewer admin and results tracking tools. A global industry leader in survey software for over 25 years. Clients in over 30 countries. Offices in Canada, U.S., France, U.K., Germany and Australia.

Phone 514-861-9255
www.voxco.com



Names of Note

In Memoriam...

■ Researcher **Bob Lavidge** died on Dec. 15 at the age of 94. Lavidge joined the *American Marketing Association* (AMA) in 1947, where he served as president of the Chicago AMA Chapter, vice president of marketing research and president of the AMA board of directors. Lavidge also helped launch the AMA Foundation and served as its first chair. In 1951, he co-founded with Bob Elrick research and consulting firm *Elrick and Lavidge*, which was sold in 1978. The Robert J. Lavidge Global Marketing Research Prize was established in his honor, which recognizes marketers who have devised and implemented research/insight procedures that have practical implications for use by others. Lavidge was also a recipient of the Charles Coolidge Parlin Marketing Research Award and the Naples Award.

■ Researcher *Toluna* has appointed **Marco Pasqualina** as vice president of sales, based in the Wilton, Conn., office, and **Mark Daniel** as vice president of digital solutions, based in the firm's Dallas office. Additionally, the firm has promoted **Patricia Chapin Bayley** to vice president, head of enterprise solutions.

■ Warren, N.J., health care data firm *Lightspeed Health* has appointed **Matt Titus** as vice president, business development – Americas. Additionally, **Franco Esposito** has been promoted to head of business development – EMEA. The firm also named **Mary Andrews** as senior vice president, global operations.

quirks.com/articles/2017/20170413.aspx

■ Atlanta-based insights and consulting firm *CMI* has added **Sharita Farhana** to its technology services team as senior DBA, while **Brian Lunde** has been promoted to senior vice president of client solutions.

Farhana

■ **Ken Østreng**, current CFO for Oslo, Norway, researcher *Confirmit*, has been named president and CEO following **Henning Hansen's** decision to resign from the role.

Rounds

■ Research software company *Dapresy*, headquartered in Sweden, has named **Beth Rounds** as CMO and **Brin Moore** as vice president, strategic partnerships. In addition, **Fredrik Osterberg** has been promoted to managing director, Europe.

Osterberg

■ Cincinnati-based firm *MarketVision Research* has appointed the following: For its health care insights team, **Richard Vitali** has joined as vice president and **Tami Salmi** has joined as senior research director. **Brittany Smith** as been appointed as a research assistant for the firm's marketing research online communities team; **Ashley Paulson** and **Paige Brown** as research assistants for its qualitative team; **Derrick Kaliney** as a research assistant for its information services team; and **Kelsey Tesdahl** as a research assistant for its client services team.

■ *MFour Mobile Research*, Irvine, Calif., has added **Neil Byrnes** as a quality assurance analyst and added **Sam Soto** to its sales team as a solutions development representative.

■ *Circle Research*, London, has promoted **Graeme Cade** and **Chris Wells** to its management board.

Servi

■ Researcher *Kelton Global*, Los Angeles, has promoted **Alison Servi** and **Amy Snow** to partner. They will both continue in their roles as senior strategic consultants.

Snow

■ **Mike Moran** has joined the board of directors for Wakefield, Mass., digital marketing nonprofit organization *SEMPO*.

■ U.K. researcher *BrainJuicer* has promoted **Alex Hunt** to run its market research business worldwide. Hunt will also join the company's board of directors.

■ Canada-based data and analytics company *Engagement Labs* has hired **Rick Larkin** as vice president of analytics.

■ In New York, **David Albert** has

expanded his role at *GfK* in North America, becoming managing director of both the Digital Experiences and Shopper and Retail Strategy teams. Albert also acts as the region's director of data insights and integration.

■ Survey automation technology company *Survox Inc.*, San Francisco, has appointed **Khozema Ujjainwala** as VP of engineering.

■ *Aimpoint Research*, Columbus, Ohio, has appointed **Missy Graham** as director of marketing and communications.

■ *Nielsen*, New York, has added **David Rawlinson**, president of online business for *W.W. Grainger Inc.*, to its board of directors and member of the audit committee.

■ Bethesda, Md., researcher *Abt Associates* has established a new regional structure to improve company support to its international health projects, appointing two new regional managing directors. **Catherine Thompson** will serve as regional managing director for Eastern, Central and Southern Africa and **Cristine Betters** will serve as regional managing director for West Africa, Middle East, Asia/Near East and Latin American and the Caribbean.

■ Research firm *Marketing Systems Group*, Horsham Pa., has appointed **Kelly Lin** as survey sample statistician/analyst.

■ **Richard Frazita** has joined Rhinebeck, N.Y., research and consulting firm *Phoenix Marketing International* as executive vice president and client advisor.

■ Columbia, Md., marketing agency *Merkle* has appointed **Michael Komasinski** as global COO for Merkle services. Based in London, he will also serve as the general manager for media services, Europe.

■ Media investment company *GroupM*, New York, has appointed **Jim Meyer** as CMO for North America.

■ **Anna McClafferty** has joined Philadelphia-based online health community platform *Health Union* as senior vice president, insights.

■ In New York, researcher *ORC International* has appointed **Ana Mackay-Sim** as CMO.

■ New York-based language strategy firm *maslansky + partners* has hired **Joe Baumann** as senior vice president of R&D and product strategy.

■ As part of a larger expansion of its analytics and data science business, *Kantar TNS UK* has named **Matt Dodd** managing partner and head of analytics for Kantar UK and Ireland.

■ *Researcher Strategy Analytics*, Boston, has promoted **Paul Brown** to director of user experience projects.

■ **Richard Jameson** has joined U.K. research firm *Kynetec* as executive director of global custom research. The new role was created to reflect the firm's recently-expanded custom research capabilities, which followed the acquisition of Ipsos Agriculture and Animal Health in North America.

Research Industry News

News notes

■ Reston, Va., firm **comScore** has been granted accreditation by the **Media Rating Council** for its mobile viewable impressions and related viewability metrics for display and video ads, in mobile Web and in-app, in validated Campaign Essentials.

Acquisitions/transactions

■ **3Cinteractive**, a Boca Raton, Fla., mobile marketing services company, has acquired the SMS messaging business portfolio of **SITO Mobile Ltd.**, a mobile engagement platform. The acquisition will allow SITO's SMS messaging clients to use 3C's Switchblade mobile marketing platform and its product solutions, including SMS/MMS, mobile wallet and push.

■ In Nuremberg, Germany, the shareholders of researcher **GfK** have accepted a voluntary public tender offer by private equity firm **Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co. L.P.** for 18.54 percent of the company. GfK Verein remains the majority shareholder of GfK with 56.46 percent.

Alliances/strategic partnerships

■ Detroit-based research and consulting firm **Morpace Inc.** has formed a global strategic agreement with New York-based firm **Marketing Evolution** to provide automotive clients with ROI Brain, an ROI optimization solution that works in conjunction with brand equity tracking.

quirks.com/articles/2017/20170414.aspx

■ **Dextro Analytics**, based in Seattle, has partnered with New York-based marketing technology company **Tapad**. Dextro Analytics will leverage Tapad's Device Graph, bolstering its insight engine to decode customer journeys.

■ **Nielsen**, New York, has integrated with San Francisco-based omnichannel personalization firm **RichRelevance** through the Nielsen Marketing Cloud, allowing retailers to leverage Nielsen audience data, analytics and technology to engage shoppers with personalized content, product recommendations and search results.

■ Salt Lake City customer experience software and services firm **MaritzCX** and **CX Workout**, a wholly-owned subsidiary of The Service Profit Chain Institute, have formed a partnership, allowing MaritzCX to add CX Workout's journey-mapping software to its portfolio of offerings.

■ New York-based marketing technology company **Simulmedia** and Chicago-based researcher **IRI** have formed a strategic alliance that allows CPG marketers to use IRI ProScores, a purchase-based predictive shopper audience targeting solution, with Simulmedia on linear TV to target their advertising to consumers based on actual purchase behaviors versus traditional demographic data.

Awards/rankings

■ Researcher **Confirmit**, based in Oslo, Norway, has announced the recipients of the **Confirmit Young Market Researcher Awards**, which identifies and rewards 20 researchers who are in their twenties and working to drive evolution and innovation in the sector. The winners include: Troy Allen, KJT Group; Emily Anderson, The Martec Group; Lizzie Cox, Hall & Partners | Open Mind; Paul Cussell, Breaking Blue; Louise Donnelly, STV Group plc; Robin Gale, Hall & Partners | Open Mind; Sandra Koh, Hall & Partners | Open Mind; Nick Licitra, KL Communications; Duncan McCready, STV Group plc; Ariel Malik, Kadence International; Christina (Figueredo) Massey, Smarty Pants; Radina Nestorova, Market Test JSC; Jake Pryszlak, Merseyside Sports Partnership; Melanie Rankin, B2B International; Rainier van Rietschoten, Veylinx; David Ruffolo, Hall & Partners | Open Mind; Audrey Schmitt, Kadence China; Brina Tretin, BuzzBack Market Research; Dean Wan, DBM Consultants; and Eric Ye, Myanmar Survey Research.

■ **Jill Draper**, president of Cedar Knolls, N.J., marketing agency **Marketsmith Inc.**, has been named among *NJBIZ Magazine*'s **Best 50 Women in Business, 2017**.

New companies/new divisions/relocations/expansions

■ Researcher **GfK**, Nuremberg, Germany, has launched Supercrunch, a new independent unit that offers customers automated analytics solutions to support marketing decisions, including product launches and pricing and advertising optimization. The offers range from data science consulting to full-service software. Norbert Wirth, previously the global head of data and science at GfK, will run Supercrunch. The new unit will offer its services in Germany first, with Great Britain and France to follow later this year.

■ **Kantar Public**, a research-based government and public sector advisory firm based in London, has launched its Singapore office, with Sandra Lim being appointed as executive director. The new office will focus on research, data and analytics, government communications effectiveness, digital service design and delivery and behavior change. Kantar Public also recently launched in Saudi Arabia.

■ Researcher Frank Hines has launched **RealLife Research Inc.**, a new video-centric mobile ethnography firm based in York, Maine. The company offers Vidnography, its proprietary consumer-generated video ethnography method, as well as live in-home mobile ethnography; video surveys and diaries; market immersions and shop-alongs; online and interactive focus groups; bulletin boards; IDIs; and exploratory labs.

■ **SIS International Research**, based in New York, has expanded and relocated its London office to the Southwark area of London. SIS EMEA relocated its offices to expand its team, qualitative fieldwork and data collection capabilities.

■ Social data intelligence company **Talkwalker**, based in Luxembourg, has opened a new office in San Francisco to further accelerate growth in the U.S. As part of its expansion, the firm also added two new hires to its U.S. team: Cara Buscaglia has joined as head of solutions and Quinn Duffy as partner manager for social networks. The San Francisco office will be led by John Zhao, head of sales – West Coast.

■ Marketing solutions firm **Marketing Werks**, based in Chicago, has opened an office in Toronto. Kathy Skube has been named VP, managing director of Marketing Werks Canada and will lead the Toronto office.

Research company earnings/ financial news

■ Stamford, Conn., research and advisory firm **Gartner Inc.** has reported total revenue of $703.2 million for fourth-quarter 2016, an increase of 9 percent over fourth-quarter 2015.

■ Nuremberg, Germany, researcher **GfK** reported GfK Group sales in fiscal year 2016 were down 3.8 percent compared to last year, according to preliminary figures, reaching approximately €1.48 billion (compared to approximately €1.54 billion last year). Organic growth was minus 1.7 percent.

■ **Nielsen**, New York, has reported revenues of approximately $1.7 billion for fourth-quarter 2016, up 2 percent compared to fourth-quarter 2015. Revenues were approximately $6.3 billion for the full year of 2016, up 2.2 percent compared to 2015.

■ **Forrester Research Inc.**, Cambridge, Mass., has reported total revenues of $83.4 million for the fourth quarter of 2016, compared to $81 million for the fourth quarter of 2015. Research revenues increased 1 percent and advisory services and events revenues increased 7 percent compared to the fourth quarter of 2015.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

••• can't-miss activities

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

ESOMAR will hold its Latin America 2017 conference on **April 5-7** in **Mexico City**. Visit www.esomar.org.

Aha! will hold a Webinar titled, 'Online Qual: New Methods for Testing Concepts & Ideas,' on **April 11** at 12:00 p.m. CDT. Visit bit.ly/2nfeyM9.

The **UTA MSMR Alumni** will hold their annual Marketing Research Conference for the industry on **April 13** in **Arlington, Texas**. Visit msmralumni.org.

Empresarial will host its spring studies trade show on **April 20-21** at the Palais Brongniart in **Paris**. Visit www.printemps-etudes.com.

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

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

Wakoopa will host the WHAT Conference, a behavioral data conference, on **April 25-26** in **Amsterdam**. Visit what-conference.com.

iModerate will hold a one-hour Webinar titled, 'Right-Sized Research: Using Qualitative Approaches To Tackle Tactical Needs,' on **April 26** at 1:00 p.m. CDT. Visit bit.ly/2m6LMx9.

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

AMA Northeast Ohio will hold its 2017 Market Research Conference on **April 27** at the DoubleTree Hotel Cleveland South in **Independence, Ohio**. Visit bit.ly/2mXxr6T.

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

The Insights Association will hold an event titled, 'NEXT: Advancing Insights Through Innovation and Research,' on **May 9-10** at the InterContinental New York Times Square in **New York**. Visit www.insightsassociation.org.

MMA will hold its Mobile Marketing Leadership Forum on **May 9-10** in **New York City**. Visit www.mmaglobal.com.

ESOMAR will hold its Asia Pacific 2017 conference on **May 17-19** in **Shanghai**. Visit www.esomar.org.

The New England Insights Association will hold its Spring Conference on **May 18** at the Waltham Woods Conference Center in **Waltham, Mass.** Visit newenglandmra.com/event/nemra-neia-2017-spring-conference.

AAPOR will hold its Annual Conference on **May 18-21** at the Sheraton New Orleans in **New Orleans**. Visit www.aapor.org/Conference-Events/Annual-Meeting.aspx.

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

MRIA will hold its 2017 National Conference on **May 31-June 2** in **Toronto**. Visit mria-arim.ca/events-awards/national-conference.

ESOMAR will hold its Summer Academy 2017 event on **June 6-8** in **Amsterdam**. Visit www.esomar.org.

The American Society of Trial Consultants will hold its annual conference on **June 8-10** at the Westin O'Hare in **Rosemont, Ill.** Visit www.astcweb.org/astc-conference.

EphMRA will hold its 2017 Annual Conference on **June 20-22** in **Amsterdam**. Visit www.ephmra.org.

KNect365 (IIR) will hold its 2017 OmniShopper conference on **June 20-22** at the Hyatt in **Minneapolis**. Visit marketing.knect365.com/omnishopper.

The Strategy Institute will hold its Digital Marketing for Financial Services Summit on **June 21-22** at The Westin Harbour Castle in **Toronto**. Visit www.financialdigitalmarketing.com.

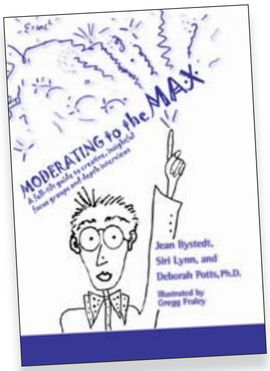
NMSBA will hold its Shopper Brain Conference - USA event on **June 22-23** in **Chicago**. Visit www.shopperbrainconference.com/chicago.

AMA will hold its 2017 Advanced Research Techniques (ART) Forum on **June 25-28** at the Hyatt at Olive 8 in **Seattle**. Visit www.ama.org.

The Merlien Institute will hold its MRMW Asia-Pacific 2017 event on **June 28-29** in **Singapore**. Visit apac.mrmw.net.

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.

MARKETING RESEARCH



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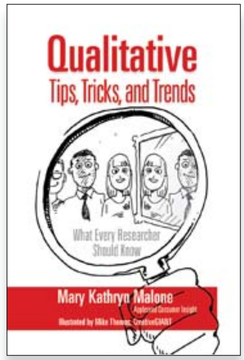

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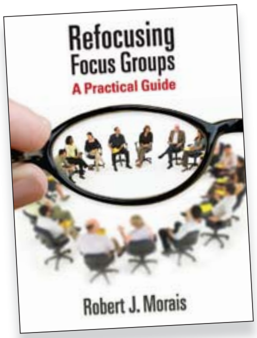

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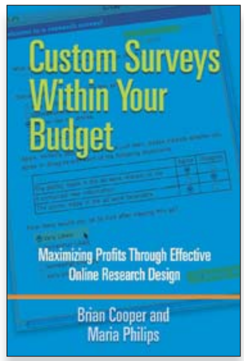

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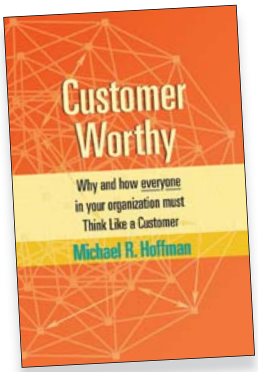

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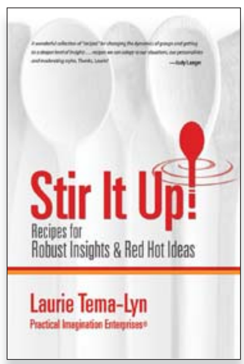

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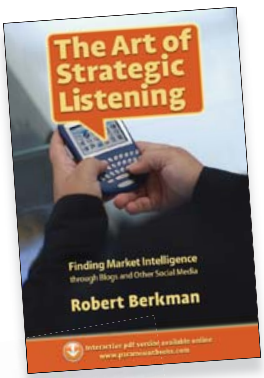

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10 minutes with...

Lauren DeRaleau and Irene Voisin

Market Research Dir. and Sr. Market Research Mgr., respectively, Groupon

You both have undergraduate degrees in psychology. What special skills or viewpoints do you feel you bring to the field?

Lauren DeRaleau: For me, psychology really lays the underpinnings of successful marketing research. Certainly, the field is moving in that direction in terms of integration of neuroscience, response latency, emotion and sentiment recognition, etc. But beyond those, for any given project, we navigate and design research that has to consider the way people think, take in stimuli, make decisions and even how they react to research design itself. A foundation in psychology has been an incredible asset.

Irene Voisin: I spent most of my psychology studies doing research and my psych degree has influenced my marketing research career in two key ways. First, it has driven me to be a stickler for rigor and quality in methodologies and data. Second, it has fomented my passion to understand the whys – psychology – behind the data.

How do you see technology changing the role of the marketing researcher?

DeRaleau: Technology is going in so many exciting directions that bring us a wealth of data of all different types. But beyond an increasing need to be familiar with so many different options for obtaining data – and of course dealing with the expectation to have it faster – I don't think the role of the researcher changes at a fundamental level. I see a strong researcher as someone who can hear a business question, has a strong familiarity with a spectrum of potential research and data solutions and is able to recommend, design and execute the best approach to get the most accurate and important insights possible.

Voisin: I'd add that more and more, marketing research methodologies are able to meet customers where they are and intercept them in key decision-making moments. This is critical to truly understanding the decision-making process. Customers can't always play back what they did or why they did it.

In your experience, what is the most effective way to present MR deliverables to stakeholders and why?

Voisin: As succinctly and directly as possible! Project managers and executives are busy and MR research insights are just some of many data points they take into consideration in their decision-making process. They likely have just a few key questions and answering them directly and succinctly means they walk away with clear answers top-of-mind. In my experience, the most effective presentations offer discussion points that spur a conversation, but a one-pager with just the two-to-three key takeaways or dashboards that they can easily pull out and remember/reference is ideal for busy business stakeholders.

DeRaleau: I'm all about putting research-driven insights into the hands of individuals at all levels of the organization. I'd underscore the word insights because I think that drives home what's most important to sharing research results – doing so in a way that drives responsible and actionable use of the data. And that is likely different depending on the goal and the audience. For example, it may be a one-pager of takeaways for an executive briefing, a 25-slide PowerPoint for the project manager to inform all details of a rollout or a 30-second video for the whole company to bring a certain consumer segment to life.

Read the full interview at quirks.com/articles/2017/20170422.aspx.