



Cactus Call

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Southwest Chapter—Marketing Research Association

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Message from the president

All that planning, all that angst and now the Vegas conference is a pleasurable memory. A sure sign of a good conference is when even the planners have a good time. I must say thank you again to all the volunteers and chapter board members, without whose help we never could have done this conference.

I want to put out a teaser for those of you who didn't attend in hopes of enticing you for next year. The theme of all the speakers was interwoven to spell C-H-A-N-G-E— change based on positive moves with engaging possibilities as opposed to fear of the future. Jane Miller (Gallup group) spoke of quality, the idea of paying by the interview and how to control it thus allowing for flexible schedules and higher hourly wage. There was a focus group of "real" respondents which, for one thing, generated the idea of dropping the word "market" from intros as respondents can't distinguish between Market Research versus telemarketing, what a good idea. The list goes on forever. Mark your calendar in Dec of 2000 to plan to attend the 2001 Las Vegas conference in Feb or March. I, personally, gained knowledge and insights as to how to expand my thinking. The other real asset is all the new friends I made & and the laughs we shared.

There were an unprecedented number of first timers this year. I would hope you touch base with any of your board members to increase your comfort level and hopefully your participation level. We promise to start you out gently.

No grass is growing under our feet, we have started our scholarship program; (read the description of the scholarship program in this issue,) with the hopes of furthering education for people who want to grow in our industry.

We are also in the midst of planning a chapter celebration where managers and supervisors can come to learn and share ideas. More news about this to follow.

Just so you can picture me while reading my message, I'm sitting here in my bright yellow Luxor sweatshirt while banging Dilbert on my desk listening to his words of wisdom.☘

Peggy O'Connor

CACTUS CALL is a bi-monthly publication issued by the South-west Chapter of the Marketing Research Association.

Comments, suggestions and submissions should be sent to: Nancy Sullivan at 303/449-6558, ext. 104, or nancy@rrcassoc.com.

If you wish to place an ad, please call Robin McClure at 972/869-2366, for a fax order form. Cost for a one-time ad is \$30; to have the ad run in four consecutive issues costs \$25 each. Please call as soon as possible as the next deadline is May 1, 2000.

1999/2000

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Hiring Interviewers

By Kathleen O'Brien, WestGroup Research

Interviewer Retention in a Competitive Labor Market

Just yesterday there was an article titled, "Businesses Worried About Finding Qualified Employees". It seems that many of the newspapers these days are reporting how hard it is to find and, more important, keep good employees. What chance does the Market Research firm have then, when it must compete with telemarketing and customer service phone banks for employees? Oftentimes, these other types of phone banks are able to pay a better base rate or offer more money through commissions. The worry, as the newspaper article states, is finding qualified employees. However, for the highly competitive field of telephone work, the worry becomes one of finding qualified employees *and then* keeping them once your company has invested in the training necessary for a good market research employee. Our company has tried several strategies to help solve this problem and it is my hope that maybe one of them may be of use to other companies out there who face the same dilemma.

The first strategy that we have used is an incentive program that recognizes quality interviewing first, and then the quantity of work completed. Interviewers who have been monitored doing quality interviewing may receive a formal recognition slip from one of their supervisors. The slip tells them what job they were working and what specific quality measure they were recognized for. This information helps the employee to know that they have been noticed for their quality work and more important, encourages them to repeat the positive action. In

regards to quantity, those interviewers who are the highest producers on a job or who exceed the goal completes per hour for a particular job also receive a recognition slip.

The interviewers collect these slips until they receive four, at which time they cash them in for a ten-dollar gift certificate to a local merchant. This program has not only been a great way to continue to ensure our quality and quantity of surveys, but has also motivated the employees by letting them feel rewarded for their hard work. We set no limits on the amount of gift certificates they can earn. The most important result, though, has been the retention of employees that we have been able to achieve. We find that we are not losing them to commission based telemarketing phone banks anymore. Even though we still can't match their bonus programs, this recognition program lets them feel as though they can earn a little bit more than their base pay, and most of them have stated that they prefer research calling over telemarketing. That small incentive is what has tipped the scales in our favor and has probably saved us more money in advertising and training than we have ever paid in compensation.

A second program that we utilize is called the "Tag" program. Very much like the game of tag that you played as a child, employees are able to 'tag' fellow workers with a slip that specifically states the great work the other employee was noticed for. This program is based on the empowerment principles espoused by William C. Byham, president and co-founder of Development Dimensions International. Any employee at WestGroup, regardless of rank or department, may fill out a tag slip that describes another persons special skills or successes. Slips are posted on a bulletin board in the breakroom over the course of a



month so that all employees can read about each others accomplishments.

At the beginning of the next month, a slip is selected in a random drawing and the employee commended on the slip receives a five-dollar gift certificate. This program helps to build the team atmosphere and to acknowledge achievements. Positive feedback of this type helps to reinforce quality issues, production issues, and is a way for employees to feel more involved in the company as a whole. The response we have received from our employees is tremendous and the team atmosphere has dramatically improved, all at the cost of five dollars a month! We have found that as we increase the employee's responsibility and commitment, the results are two-fold: we have less turnover and we have more eyes turned towards the company's goals.

Las Vegas Conference Wrap

by Mike Exinger, Conference Czar

It's history. The 14th annual Las Vegas Joint Chapter Conference is in the books, and for those who attended, it was a great show. Sure, I'm a little biased, but:

- ◆ All of our speakers got good-to-outstanding reviews,
- ◆ The hotel wasn't a disaster and wasn't under construction (it was actually rated quite good by most guests) and
- ◆ Everyone came away with good information, new friends...and a few came back with more money that they left with. Alas, I was NOT one of them.

Seriously, it's difficult to plan an

event of this magnitude and make it work perfectly for everyone. The board worked very hard to put together a speaker schedule that offered something for everyone, and speakers that were great to listen to. The end-of-event survey proves it! No one scored less than a 3.5 on the 5-point scale, and two speakers (Maureen Mulvaney and Jane Miller) topped 4.50! The overall conference rating was 4.33; the hotel got a 3.93 (though the three individual ratings for food, facilities, and value were all above 4.00); and more than three-fourths agree strongly (57%) or somewhat (21%) that they'll be back in 2001.

Overall, we had 150 in attendance, just off from last year's record. We had quite a few first-timers...in fact, almost half of those who completed the survey said that this was their first Las Vegas conference. We had a 55% return rate (83) for the surveys – offering the free raffle ticket must've helped! The comments are good, extensive, and can be summarized as follows:

- ◆ You can't please everyone.
- ◆ Next time we'll get the entire hotel to ourselves.
- ◆ Everything everyone wants for 2001 costs more money.

OK, seriously...there were lots of good ideas as to how to improve badges, different types of food at reception), and several speaker/topic ideas that we can act on. The conference committee will review the comments (we do take them seriously) as there are LOTS of good ideas we can work on.

If you weren't able to join us in 2000, we hope that you plan for 2001 – now. You can start by making your own suggestions for speakers, topics, and anything that we can use/do to make the 15th annual conference bigger and

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MISSION STATEMENT SOUTHWEST CHAPTER OF THE MRA

The Southwest Chapter of the Marketing Research Association mission is to add value to the membership.

We will do this by:

Educating members about the latest techniques and technologies in all aspects of marketing research—including design, data collection, sampling, processing, analysis, and management—to promote excellence in marketing and opinion research; Providing more in-depth communications through newsletters and networking opportunities with other professional through town chapter meetings and conferences;

Promoting chapter membership in all areas of market research, encouraging membership participation through opportunities for involvement;

Providing leadership and direction to promote professionalism and excellence within our membership while adhering to the National MRA code of ethics;

Encouraging understanding and appreciation by the general public for the aims and methods of marketing research through support of public awareness campaigns from National MRA;

Encouraging membership cooperation with educational institutions in preparing students for careers in marketing research.

MARKETING RESEARCH ASSOCIATION

The Marketing Research Association is dedicated to:

Promoting excellence in marketing and opinion research;

Creating value by providing members with a variety of opportunities for advancing and expanding their marketing research and related business skills;

Enhancing the marketing research environment as an advocate with appropriate business and government entities, other associations, and the public.

better. You can also make plans to volunteer (we need more than 50) or perhaps your company would like to be a sponsor (we have several levels).

Drop me an e-mail to mexinger@clearwater-research.com and tell me what you'd like to see – after all, it's your conference! 🌵

Web sites worth clicking

by Mike Exinger, Duke of URL

This column continues our feature of marketing research-related sites that you may find interesting, worthwhile, information, educational...or just plain fun! You are more than welcome to submit your own ideas and suggestions for sites -- send me the URL (web address) in an e-mail to mexinger@clearwater-research.com and I'll check it out and pass it on.

So, when was the last time you visited the MRA site at <http://www.mra-net.org>?

If you didn't know, the MRA site is going through an overhaul. First off, they have a new person in Hartford – Stacey Turner -- who is responsible for the care and maintenance of the site. She's working with the Technology Council do redevelop the look, and with the other councils to build content. It's no longer a stagnant site, as there is always something new and worth checking out.

As I write this (March 1) you can click on:
 Find out about [ASPIRE!](#)
ATTENTION: [Census Department Request - March 1 Vote- Arizona Mystery Shopping Dead or Alive!](#)
 Join in our new [Discussion Forums Annual Conference](#) June 7-9, 2000 Seattle, WA -- You can now buy

[advertising](#) in the Conference Program!

[Partners Wanted-](#) Help us create the leading industry Web site... Find Marketing Research Companies by specialty with our [Blue Book On-line Database](#) Find [job openings and business opportunities](#) in our online classifieds Check our [Online Book Store](#) for the latest marketing research and business management publications

Note that the Forums are new – they are real "Interactive Forums" that will allow you to ask questions of other MRA members, share information, get answers, and so on.

Also – there are links to membership information, events and of course, the bookstore (and there's a change in the works here, too...more info as it becomes available).

If you haven't been to the MRA site lately, go now...and then come back later this year when it's revised, revamped, and lookin' 21st Century!

And that's it for this month -- got a good site? E-mail me the URL, and we'll post it for all to see and visit here! 🌵

Here's to You!

by Julie A. McClurg



"Here's to You" is a column for celebrating YOU! The idea is to bring something to help us to celebrate life! The only connection this column has to market research is that the contributors are in the field of market research. So, read, enjoy, and send in your ideas.

March is the month when most of us start thinking about spring. The fever to be outdoors starts creeping up in all of us, especially those of us in the office most of the day.

Wouldn't it be nice to bring a little spring into the office?

There are many ways to cool that fever in the hours of 9-5 when most of us are devoted to the paperwork mounting on our desk. One of my favorites is to decorate my desk with the colorful flowers and plants of spring.

Depending on your personal preference you can enhance your office with cut flowers, bulb plants, and/or greenery such as ivy. Ranunculus is an annual flower which does well in cool areas. Its appearance is similar to a rose in bloom but the stems are very curvy and spontaneous. The colors of Ranunculus include solid maroon, yellow, purple, pink, and cream. They run about \$1.00 a stem and eight to ten stems make a delightful bouquet.

Gerbera Daisies are always a great way to add color to the office environment. They come in vibrant colors such as red and yellow and even fuchsia. They have a big face, unlike most daisies, and can add a touch of uniqueness to any bouquet. If you are looking for something unusual to put on your desktop I would suggest taking a look at the hydrangea. This cut flower is rather large in circumference. It is typically found in blue or purple and actually will be the talk of the office simply standing alone in a tall vase.

Another alternative is to place a bulb plant on your desk top. There are numerous bulb plants available this time of year. Among the favorites are the Tulip, the Daffodil, and my personal favorite- the Paper White Narcissus, a daffodil cousin. The Tulip is available in a variety of solid colors and mixed colors. They can be bought ready to sprout at your local florist. Tulips take a couple of weeks to come up from their bulb; however, they will bloom for up to

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four weeks on your desktop. They do enjoy lots of natural sunlight; a window seat would also be a great home for your tulip pot. Tulips will cost you about \$1.00 a bulb.

The daffodil has a distinctive personality with its range of colors from canary yellow to pale peach and protruding petals. This bulb plant will grow to be between eight to twelve inches in height and will spice up your desk for up to four weeks. These bulbs run about \$1.00 apiece. Make sure that it receives plenty of natural sunlight. Finally, if you visited my desk you would find Paper Whites. This bulb plant can reach eighteen inches in height and is extremely fragrant. Paper Whites are typically white like their name suggests. However, you can find them in buttercup yellow varieties. The Paper White bulbs run about \$2.00 per bulb.

For those of you who would rather have greenery as opposed to blossoms I recommend Ivy, Pothos, Schefflera or a combination of all three. A combination of three small plants will run about \$15.00. This arrangement will last a long time, and if you have a green thumb it could even grow out of its original pot, lasting several years. I hope each of you decides to bring a little spring into your office environment. If you have any questions or ideas please e-mail me at juliem@rcassoc.com I would love to hear from you. 🌵

Thanks For Your Generosity!!

By Nancy Sullivan

Part of the fun of the annual Las Vegas conference is participating in the raffle. Many of us won all kinds of wonderful goodies. In addition to all of us having fun, this activity is an opportunity to help a good cause. Each year 100% of the proceeds from the raffle are donated to a non-profit organization that is doing a lot to help others in need. This year we raised \$740 to be donated to the Boulder County Safehouse in Boulder, Colorado.

The Boulder County Safehouse began in 1979 and has since provided services to women and children in abusive situations. The Boulder County Safehouse offers temporary shelter, legal and financial information, as well as outreach support groups.

The Safehouse operates an emergency shelter for women and their children leaving abusive situations. The house is a secured residence in Boulder; the address is kept confidential. Women and children residing at the safehouse receive one-to-one and group counseling as well as food, clothing, and referrals to community resources. For women dealing with battering but not requiring shelter, the Safehouse offers short-term one-to-one counseling and support groups. In cooperation with local law enforcement, Safehouse representatives meet with victims of domestic violence after an arrest has been made to provide support and information.

Boulder County Safehouse staff and volunteers speak to community groups on subjects related to domestic violence. Public school programs on family and dating violence are available for children of all ages.

Battering can happen to anyone: women of color, people with disabilities, the old and young, the poor and the wealthy. The Safehouse can provide for basic needs or lend support.

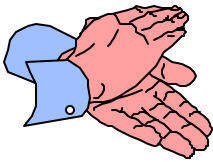
The Safehouse relies on the generosity of individuals, churches, businesses, and community organizations to maintain their services. Thanks to all who participated in the raffle, you've helped a truly worthy organization that is making a real difference in the lives of many!!! 🌵

Members on the move

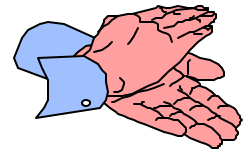
Announcing the formation of the **OmniSource Group**, the Premier Provider of Consumer, Business and Public Opinion Information.

Discovery Research Group, Inc. and Quick Test / Heakin Research, Inc. join forces to form the **OmniSource Group**. For more information on this merger, please visit their website at www.drगतah.com. 🌵





THANK YOU!



I would like to thank all of you that volunteered your help on-site for the Las Vegas conference. Without all of you things would not have run so smoothly. It was a great conference and I think we can all be very proud of our efforts. A big **"thank you"** goes to the following people:

Hospitality Volunteers: Carlos Kelley/Las Vegas/San Diego Surveys, Lorei Musselman/L.A. Research Inc., Dan Musselman/L.A. Research Inc. Susan Taylor/Taylor Research, Harriett Huntley/Taylor Research, Jan Borkum/Luth Research, Nancy Levine/Nancy Levine Marketing Research, Thomas Haynes/ASI Entertainment, Susan Perl/Quick Test Inc./NQN, Rebecca Hanner/Consumer Pulse of Los Angeles, Sonnie Gavin/SoCal Research, Jolie Kennedy/San Diego Survey's, Inc., Tammy Bergmans/Taylor Research, Rebecca Hanner/Consumer Pulse of Los Angeles, Patsy Trice/Taylor Research, Betty Jo Lopez/Taylor Research, Margarita Rodriguez/California Survey Research Services, Valeria Hudson/Discovery Research Group

and Mari Lindemann/Mari Hispanic Field Services.

Session Assistant Volunteers: Peggy O'Connor/On-Line Communications, Vic Walsh/Western Wats Center, Linda Brazel/Galloway Research Service, Kim Larson/Discovery Research Group, Nancy Sullivan/Boulder Focus Center, Lizabeth Clawson/MRC Focus and Mike Exinger/Clearwater Research, Inc.

Registration Volunteers: Barbara Rosner/Rosner Field Audits, Bobbie Earle/On-Line Communications, Angela Gomez/Research Data Design, Cathy Cottle/Survey Sampling, Inc., Gene Filipi/CFMC, Magda Cooling/Opinions...of Sacramento, Hugh Miller/Opinions...of Sacramento, Mark Rosenkranz/Pacific Market Research, Diane Kientz/Margaret Yarborough Associates, Roger Kientz/Margaret Yarborough Associates and Jane Rosen/Nichols Research.

Raffle Volunteers: Linda Brazel/Galloway Research Service,

Robin McClure/Dallas Focus, Peggy O'Connor/On-Line Communications, Stacy Scott/Dallas Focus, Al Scott/Dallas Focus, Kelly Barker/Dallas Focus, Nancy Levine/Nancy Levine Marketing Research, Bobbie Earle/On-Line Communications and Amy Shields/Nichols Research.

Decorations Volunteers: Debbie Calzaretta/Eagle Research-Denver, Nancy Sullivan/Boulder Focus Center.

Photograph Volunteers: Steve Larson/Discovery Research Group, Linda Pernick/Field Management Associates and Angela Gomez/Research Data Design.

We are already making plans for next year and will again be asking for volunteers and it is nice to know you can again be called upon. 🌵

Thanks!
Linda K. Brazel
Galloway Research Service

AN OL' TIMERS - FIRST TIME

Having been involved in marketing research for over 25 years, it's hard to believe finding myself a "first timer". As a "first timer", at the recent Annual Las Vegas Conference, I was very impressed. Programming and scheduling were very well organized. The program flowed easily from one event to the next. From the opening night reception to the closing on Friday, a friendly, fun atmosphere was present. It seemed as though all board members, had only one thing in mind, to make sure all attendees felt welcome. A difficult task, as they were so busy with putting on a great conference! The Conference was well worth my attending. Hats off



to **all** those involved in putting on a worthwhile event. 🌵
Elisa D. Galloway
Galloway Research Services
San Antonio, Texas

Southwest Chapter Scholarship

by *Bobbie Earle*

The Board of Directors of the Southwest Chapter has established a continuing education award for its members and/or employees of its members. Any member in good standing may apply for an award for their own use or for one of their full or dedicated part-time employees. This will allow the recipient to pursue a course that will upgrade the skills used in their current position, or prepare them for additional responsibilities.

Here is your chance to take or have an employee take that course in statistics, management, computers, etc. that would bring you up to date on the latest advancements, while still maintaining current job responsibilities.

No award will exceed \$500 and the number of awards will depend upon the funds made available by the SWC Board. This award has been created by the SWC for SWC members or their employees and should be a benefit to the recipient, the member company and to the Marketing Research Industry in general.

Applications must be submitted by May 31, 2000 to be considered for the 2000/2001 study year. Scholarships will be awarded in July and will be presented when a certificate of completion or transcript has been presented to the Board.

For further information or an award application contact:

Nancy Hayslett, Scholarship Coordinator
On-Line Communications, Inc.
8304 East Jenan Drive
Scottsdale, AZ 85260
480.905.1429
nancyh@on-linecom.com

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Southwest Chapter Nominations

by *Linda Brazel*

Now that the Las Vegas Conference is over, it's time to get to the next topic of business. Yes, it's time to start nominations for 2000-2001 officer positions. Make this your year, run for office! If you don't want to do this yourself, nominate someone you feel would be a qualified candidate for the position.

Being an officer in the Southwest Chapter of MRA is a privilege that will make one feel good about their accomplishments at the end of the year. As an officer in the Southwest Chapter, one has continuous input in the MRA activities, the most recent information on chapter activities, and the opportunity to work closely with other Southwest Chapter members in order to achieve the optimum capabilities of the chapter.

The following positions are open for re-election: President-Elect, Secretary, Treasurer, and four Directors-at-Large. If you would like to be considered for and office or would like to nominate someone, please contact Linda Brazel in writing at Galloway Research Services, 4346 NW Loop 410, San Antonio, TX 78229 or call her at 210-734-4346, or fax at 210-732-4500 and of course you can e-mail her at lbrazel@gallowayresearch.com Please submit nominations for positions by April 4, 2000.

Don't forget to get nominations in for yourself or the person that you feel will be an admirable candidate! This is an important function of MRA and we look forward to hearing from you with your nominations and participation.☪

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