



Cactus Call

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Southwest Chapter—Marketing Research Association

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Inside this Issue

- 2** Respondent Trends
- 3** What do we do?
- 4** Member Profile
- 4** Web Sites Worth Clicking
- 5** Board of Directors Ballot
- 7** Southwest Chapter Financial Summary
- 8** Nominees Bio's
- 10** Las Vegas 2001

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 July 1, 2000.

Message from the president

This is a beautiful time of year. Trees budding, plants blooming & work booming. Oh, aren't we lucky? The answer is "Yes," but with it comes major challenges.

I have learned that the greatest thing you can teach your co-workers is how to communicate. Not an easy matter to teach – when to play hardball, when to be the teacher, when to be the listener, when to be the friend. It's difficult to know all the roles you have to play and how to play them. Along with communication, another subject of major importance is quality – knowing what's expected by your peers and clients.

The Southwest Chapter has decided to address these questions plus many others at our "CHAPTER CELEBRATION." The celebration is designed for middle management – those responsible for making the business run smoother and therefore more profitably. We will have dynamic speakers to address these issues and in addition to the speakers there will be round table discussions to address YOUR particular needs. I promise you and your co-workers a very worthwhile day.

The date is set for August 12th in Austin, TX. More information will follow in separate articles, but do put a RESERVE for this date now! 🌵

Peggy O'Connor

SPECIAL THANKS!

Heather Nunez from Dallas Focus faithfully and without fanfare, put this publication together for many years. She did an **EXCELLENT** job and the Southwest Chapter MRA Board would like to publicly thank her for her hard work and dedication. This newsletter would never have come so far without her involvement. 🌵

THANK YOU HEATHER!

The Southwest Chapter



1999/2000

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**MRA Southwest Chapter
www.swmra.org**

**RESPONDENT
TRENDS ARE
NEGATIVE. TAKE
ACTION NOW!**

By Carl Feld, Western Wats

The recently released findings of the Council for Marketing and Opinion Research's (CMOR) 1999 "Respondent Cooperation And Industry Image Survey" are depressing for market researchers, especially those who collect data by telephone. Jane Sheppard, Director of Respondent Cooperation for CMOR filled researchers in on the report's content at the annual conference of the Marketing Research Association's Southwest, Southern California and Northern California/Pacific Northwest Chapters in February. The CMOR study builds on the findings of a 1995 Benchmark Respondent Cooperation Study conducted by CMOR and preceding Walker studies.

Here are some highlights from the data that Western Wats Opinion Research Center (WWORC) helped collect:

- 74% of those interviewed have participated in a telephone interview previously. This figure has flattened out in the last five years.
- The refusal rate on these studies has jumped from 41% in 1980 to 60% in 1999. Most of the refusals (68%) are now initial refusals, as opposed to qualified refusals. Those who refused also indicated a greater preference for regular mail than telephone surveys as they are less invasive. Internet surveys were also preferred over mail.
- 41% of those interviewed believe that survey research is

really a disguise for a sales pitch.

- The number of those interviewed who pay attention to reporting of political polls has dropped to 41% in 1999 from 50% in 1995.
- The number of those interested in comparing their opinions with others has dropped from 64% in 1995 to 57% in 1999.

The CMOR report observes that the general population of the U.S. perceives a decline in interviewer professionalism and courtesy combined with an increase in survey length. These and other factors are contributing to increased refusal non-cooperation rates, driving up research costs and decreasing the validity of results. We know that 74% of the general population has been touched once by telephone interviewing. Based on the profile of those who completed the CMOR study, we know that if each of those interviewers and their surveys had been kind to respondents, there would probably be a different opinion today of research among these people.

So what can we do about it? Researchers should make a concerted effort to use data collection services which have a service-oriented interviewer ethic. They should also be sure to use survey language which caters to respondent interests and thanks them for participation. WWORC research has proven that this increases response rates as laid out in "Good Introductions Save Researchers Time, Money" in the February 28 issue of *Marketing News*. Language which promotes the importance of the survey to the respondent's "world" is especially effective. This is particularly important for political researchers, as the general population is increasingly uninterested in answering their questions and disbelieving of their results.

Researchers should support their professional organizations including CMOR, AAPC and the NCPP through paid memberships and promotion of the organizations' names. These organizations fight the telemarketing, "sugging" and "push polling" which have greatly contributed to the increase in initial refusals. They also have emerging education programs targeted at the general public. To read about the positions of these organizations see "Push-Polling' Into 2000" in the May issue of Campaigns and Elections and contact these organizations directly at www.cmor.org, www.ncpp.org and www.theaacpc.org.

Finally, researchers should *write shorter surveys!* The research industry has seen a trend towards longer surveys over the last several years as researchers attempt to gather more information with less funding. The respondents have noticed it too, and increasingly don't like it. The Gallup Organization has taken a stand on this issue. As of this year, they will no longer accept surveys for fielding from anyone over 18 minutes in length for the general population or 15 minutes for executives. Jane Miller, Executive Vice-President and CFO for Gallup made it quite clear at the regional MRA conference. The cost to researchers in staff loss and negative influences on respondents outweighs the benefits of this kind of work.

The combination of all these things will help to reverse the negative trend in respondent behavior we are seeing today. †

What Do We Do? By Mike Exinger, Clearwater Research

Has anyone asked you "what do you do?" Oh, I don't mean your title or job description – I mean,

when you tell people you work at "XYZ Research" (the name of your company) and they say "What's that?" and you tell them it's a marketing research firm and they say,

"Marketing Research? What do you do?"

One of our former employees used to tell people, "We're the people who call you up at dinnertime to ask you questions." And while that got a laugh or two (or a groan or three), I realize now that it's probably not the best answer (I will not discuss accuracy at this time). Here's why I think that now:

Back in February at the MRA Las Vegas Conference we held a focus group where the subject was – **us!** That's right – we invited previous survey respondents to come in and tell us what they think about marketing research.

The answer is -- not much.

They confused us with Telemarketers. They said we call too much, too often, too rudely, and we never **EVER** say thank you (a complete list of their "recommendations" can be found in the sidebar at right).

Needless to say, there were some shocked and unhappy researchers in the audience. So does that mean that we should be ashamed of what we do, and when asked in the future, tell folks that we do something different and more highly regarded (like disk jockey or meth-lab attendant)?

No.

We ARE highly regarded, well thought of, and respected. Our clients tell us this. A lot. They tell us in words and by awarding us their business. Again and again. In fact, we give ourselves pretty high regard for the work we do. It

Focus Group Recommendations

- Be straightforward
- Be up-front
- Be personable
- Tell me you're not selling my name *
- Tell me you're not selling me anything *
- Tell me you value my opinion
- If you can't offer me money, send me a sample (product testing) *
- Thank me!
- Don't call me too late (or too early)

NOTE: Remember, this is what respondents told us – I don't necessarily endorse all of these, especially the ones with a ""*

shows by our quality of work, our commitment to service and our dedication to our satisfied clients. So why doesn't anyone else know? Because we don't tell them. And maybe...it's because we ourselves really don't know.

So...Let me tell you what we do.

(This is Clearwater Research's list, but I'll guess yours will look similar...)

- We save lives** (behavioral risk surveys and Seat Belt focus groups).
- We make products easier to use** (usability lab tests).
- We save people money** (a variety of projects).
- We save companies money** (many studies, including new product tests).
- We shape public policy** (transportation/parking studies).
- We keep babies healthy** (immunization studies).
- We improve products** (many studies).
- We provide recreation opportunities** (Fish and Game and travel studies).

You get the idea. By asking the public questions about their lives, their habits, the products they buy and the things they do...we make the world a better place...for them. Feel free to create your own list.

And then, the next time someone asks you what we do – tell them. And be proud of it. †

Web sites worth clicking...

By Mike Exinger, the Duke of URL

This column continues our feature of marketing research-related sites that you may find interesting, worthwhile, informative, 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.

This month, we feature the MRA site at <http://www.mra-net.org>...

Wait a minute...didn't we JUST DO the MRA site? As a matter of fact, we did...but it's got an entirely NEW look! Thanks to the diligent efforts of our own Scott Spain (and Paul Melillo and Stacie Turner of MRA home office and the rest of the Technology Council and the content provided by the other MRA Councils), the new-look MRA site is up and functional.

The look is the first thing you notice, and it's designed for ease of use by even the most non-techie researcher -- easy access to the most-often visited elements of the MRA site, easy to navigate, easy to find, and easy to get-to.

What's new besides the look? Lots. There's more content, and more information for members. There's headline news on the industry and MRA happenings, products and services, a calendar of events, career development, and more. The MRA BlueBook is still here, and it's interactive and searchable. There are links to legislative action, response rate information, and industry wide papers. There's the career development page and links to learning. There's the

Technology Corner (I had to plug that one). There are places to ask questions and places to find answers.

And there are the forums. I briefly mentioned them in the last column, and now, I make a plug for them again. I can't think of a better way to ask your peers about issues that you might have questions on. I can't think of a better way to contribute to your peers by answering somebody else's question. And I can't think of a better way to LEARN how others think about various issues and concerns (or to learn a better way in which to perform various techniques and methods in marketing research) than through the new forums.

Here is a current (mid-April) list of some of the topics on the main forum board:


- Ad blocking software
- Market Research Disasters
- Sugging in Non-telephone Mediums
- Tabbing packages
- Double Click privacy issues
- Question for Internet Ethics Task Force Members
- TURF Analysis
- Web Survey Software
- Crosstabs for Dummies
- Questions about careers in marketing research
- Mail Survey Response Rate
- Perceptual mapping software
- Respondent databases
- Online Research – Sample Suppliers

See? Some good information, some challenging issues, and some fun! May I humbly suggest that you take a moment...now...to go visit the new MRA site and check out (and contribute) to a forum that

interests you. There's bound to be one!

And one more thing -- if you ever want to return to the MRA Home Page, just click on the MRA logo in the upper-left corner!

If you haven't been to the MRA site lately...you haven't been at all!

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! 



MEMBER PROFILE

Bert Taylor III, QCS

If you haven't already, don't be surprised if you get a call from Bert Taylor III, Client Services Manager for Quality Controlled Services (QCS). He covers the Western region of the United States, as well as Canada, and is working his way around this new and underdeveloped territory. One of the unique strengths of QCS is that they use a sales force to actually call on and visit with clients instead of waiting for people to call in with bids. In fact, Bert's favorite part of the job is meeting with his clients face-to-face whenever possible. He feels his biggest strength is in accommodating his clients and helping them complete their studies in the most efficient and timely manner possible. Bert also enjoys cooking and running, and is a graduate of the University of Missouri-Columbia with majors in personal finance and marketing. He can be reached at 800-325-3338, directly at (636) 827-1757 or by email at taylorb@qcs.com.



Peggy O'Connor
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MRA Southwest Chapter
Financial Summary Report
1/1/99 Through 12/31/99

Category Description	1/1/99-12/31/99
<u>BEGINNING BALANCE</u>	\$16,403.50
Acct. Adjust.	450.88
Business Ad	40.00
Chapter Dues	4,450.00
Conf. Income	35,121.01
Meetings	15,690.00
Refund	133.10
<u>TOTAL INCOME</u>	<u>\$55,884.99</u>
<u>EXPENSES</u>	10.00
Bank Charge	20.50
Charitable Donations	2,167.79
Conference Calls	1,357.22
Internet Registration	70.00
*LV Conference	11,000.00
LV Conference	29,706.54
Meeting Expense	10,524.78
Membership Mail	575.81
Newsletter Print	1,903.34
Strategic Plan	5,160.60
Taxes	400.00
<u>TOTAL EXPENSES</u>	<u>\$62,896.58</u>
TOTAL INCOME LESS EXPENSES	-7,011.59
<u>ENDING BALANCE</u>	<u>\$ 9,391.91</u>

*Advance payment on LV conference / 2000

Southwest Chapter MRA 2000-2001 Board of Directors Nominees

PRESIDENT – MIKE EXINGER

Mike is currently the Director of Research Administration for Clearwater Research, Inc., and has been with the firm since 1992. He has a B.S and M.A in Communication / Radio-TV-Film from Eastern Michigan University and more than 20 years experience in management, media, and communications. He coordinates the activities of the Research Department at Clearwater Research, overseeing workflow, finance, and resources. He has adapted his experience to help Clearwater push the technology envelope with Internet technologies for on-line surveys and focus groups and has created custom software programs specifically designed for marketing research and database applications. He serves on the Technology Council for the Marketing Research Association, is Conference "Czar" for the Annual Joint MRA Chapter Las Vegas Conference, and is currently the President-Elect for the Southwest Chapter of MRA.

PRESIDENT-ELECT – KIM LARSON

Kim Larson is currently Director of Telephone Operations for Discovery Research Group of Utah. Kim began her career at Discovery in May of 1990. Before joining Discovery, she worked as a Regional Director of Sales and Advertising for a national weight loss company. Kim brings to Discovery comprehensive professional and educational experience in operations management, finance, human resource management and strategic planning. She received her Master of Business Administration from Utah State University, she also holds a B.S. in Human Resources from Utah State University. Kim is currently the MRA Southwest Chapter Secretary.

VICE-PRESIDENT – BOBBIE EARLE

Bobbie Earle is currently Director of Operations for On-Line Communications, Inc. She has been employed with OLC since October 1999. Prior to joining OLC, she worked for Opinions Unlimited for 9 years and held several positions from interviewer to programmer to facility manager. Bobbie graduated from New Mexico State University in 1989 with a Bachelor of Business in Marketing. She has been active in the National Marketing Research Association as well as the SW Chapter since 1996. She has served as the Membership Chair for the SW Chapter for the past 2 years and is currently serving as Vice President.

SECRETARY – KATI BEAUCHAINE-BROWN

Kati Beauchaine-Brown is a principal of KB Brown & Associates, a marketing research consulting firm, and has more than 13 years in both qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Prior to founding KB Brown & Associates, she was Vice President of Research for a marketing firm specializing in credit union services. For the past several years, Ms. Brown's study concentration has been on the analytical side of research, helping clients be more successful with customers or consumers, members, employees, Boards, and management teams. Ms. Brown was a member of the Maricopa County Planning & Zoning Commission (an appointed position) for seven years. She has served on several other advisory boards, most recently as Vice President of Communications for the Phoenix Chapter of the American Marketing Association. She co-founded the New River Improvement Association and the Executive Women's Coalition for Children. Current professional affiliations include the American Marketing Association and the Marketing Research Association. Ms. Brown earned certification from the RIVA School of Moderating as a Focus Group Moderator. She is currently working toward a degree in behavioral science.

TREASURER – BARB ROSNER

Barb began working in the marketing research field as an interviewer with Walker Research in 1976. She progressed to project supervisor, assistant manager, training coordinator, quality assurance coordinator, and field auditor. Barb is currently self-employed as a consultant/field auditor on projects nationwide. She is a charter member of Southwest Chapter MRA, and has held the Treasurer's position in 1985-6, and 1996-current. She has served on several committees for National MRA as well as for the chapter, and is a fixture at the annual Las Vegas conference. Barb looks forward to serving as Treasurer for another year -- another great year for the chapter.

DIRECTOR AT LARGE – ELISA D. GALLOWAY

Professional record: Owner/Vice President of Galloway Research Service (1971 till present).

MRA Involvement: MRA 2000 National Conference Program Committee (current), Fall MRA Education Conference Program Chairperson (1999), Professional Development Content Committee (1998-9), other Conference Committee/other committees over 15 years ago.

Other Involvement: Currently Serving on the South West Texas Muscular Dystrophy Association Executive Committee (1990-current – member, treasurer, secretary, and Telethon Finance Officer, chaired several fundraising events); Local School Council for St. Luke’s Catholic School (1999-current as Executive Committee member, Secretary, Chairperson of several events); served with San Antonio Archdiocesan School Council (Year 2000- Outstanding Catholic Leader Award nominee), San Antonio Area Council of Girl Scouts; Boy Scouts of America and St. Luke Catholic School Parent Club.

DIRECTOR AT LARGE – BERT TAYLOR

Bert Taylor III is Client Services Manager for Quality Controlled Services (QCS). He covers the Western region of the United States, as well as Canada, and is working his way around this new and underdeveloped territory. One of the unique strengths of QCS is that they use a sales force to actually call on and visit with clients instead of waiting for people to call in with bids. In fact, Bert’s favorite part of the job is meeting with his clients face-to-face whenever possible. He feels his biggest strength is in accommodating his clients and helping them complete their studies in the most efficient and timely manner possible. Bert also enjoys cooking and running, and is a graduate of the University of Missouri-Columbia with majors in personal finance and marketing.

DIRECTOR AT LARGE – GENE FILIPI

Gene is currently the Western Regional Sales Manager for Computers for Marketing Corp (CfMC) and has been with the Company since 1998. He has a B.S. in Marketing from Doane College in Lincoln, Nebraska. Prior to working at CfMC, he worked at Leiberman Research Worldwide as an Assistant Field Director for one year and the Gallup Organization for eight years in all phases of the market research process. He is a member of the Technology Council for the Marketing Research Association, Vice President of the Northern California/Pacific Northwest MRA chapter, and Vice President – Elect for THE Sponsorship Committee for the San Francisco American Marketing Association.

DIRECTOR AT LARGE – VIC WALSH

Professional record: Western Wats Center; managed new business development/company growth (7 years); managed data processing and programming department (2 years).

Degree: BS, Accounting, Brigham Young University

MRA Involvement: Professional Development Council Chair (1999-present); Professional Development Council (1997-9); Business Resource Council (1996-7); Southwest Chapter Board member (1999-2000).

Other involvement: American Marketing Association, Treasurer, Salt Lake City Chapter (1994-5); AMA; CMOR; PMRG; Chamber of Commerce President's Council; and Pacesetters Club.

C O N G R A T U L A T I O N S

Stacy and Al Scott are the proud parents of Dillon Chase Scott. He arrived on April 22, 2000 weighing in at 8lbs and 2 oz and 20 inches long. He is welcomed by his big sister Jessie and his Grandmother Robin McClure, also

**M e m b e r s
on the move**

Kati Beauchaine-Brown has left LemmonTree Consulting to form KB Brown & Associates which will provide research consulting services, focusing on qualitative methods. Kati can be reach at 602-765-1300 or by e-mail katibrown@uswest.net.

Las Vegas 2001 – Joint Chapter Conference Update

Here's a quick update on next year's Las Vegas Conference (based on the feedback I received from this year's confab and responses to my e-mails...thanks to all!)

Dates for next year are now: March 14-16, 2001. Make a note of it! There is now no known conflict with meetings, holidays, etc. You can stay over for St. Patrick's Day. There may be a few who have Spring Break conflicts, but hey, they can bring the kids (plenty for them to do at Luxor's virtual reality arcade). Also, this way the weather will be warmer and the pool will be OPEN.

Vendor room: Yes! More information will be out this summer...there is a great deal of interest from both potential exhibitors and exhibitees!



Opening night entertainment: Most likely no. Most want time to meet, greet, eat, and network. Music may impair all of the above.

Gaming lessons: Yes! I'm working with Luxor to provide (craps and blackjack most likely).

I will also make available select chapters from the unpublished "Wanna Bet? A Gambling Guide for the Novice and the Nervous."

Evening entertainment: Maybe. We may try to arrange advance first-come-first-served tix for hot shows, if we can...Blue Man Group at Luxor is currently hottest tix in town; others mentioned "O" at Bellagio, House of Blues at Mandalay Bay. No one mentioned the new David Cassidy show. We'll see what we can obtain.

If you have ideas for speakers or topics, additional comments, or if your company had interest in being a vendor -- Please drop me a line at the e-mail address below. And thanks! 🌵

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