

Cactus Call

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Southwest Chapter—Marketing Research Association

September 2000

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

Comments, suggestions and submissions should be sent to: Kim Larson at 435/753-9014, or klarson@drgutah.com

If you wish to place an ad, please call Robin McClure at 972/869-2366, for an order form. Please call as soon as possible as the next deadline is



Marketing Research Association

Message from the President

Well, here it is – my first Presidential column. Sorry I'm not wearing a tie (like when do I ever?). Anyway, it's not how I look, but how the chapter looks, and we're looking good!

By the time you read this, our Chapter Celebration in Austin will be history. Even before the event, I can say it was a success – we were able to reach out to members (and staff of members) who had not previously participated in a chapter event. Specifically geared to be "accessible" to all, the subject matter and the setup were designed with you-the-member in mind. For those of you who were interested and could not attend, we did hear you – we will consider other dates, weekday dates, and look for other ways to provide more opportunities for professional development.

Another event that has already taken place...but not yet as I write this...is the SW-MRA Scholarships. My thanks to Nancy Hayslett for spearheading the project, it's one that I hope we can continue for years to come. I do know that we've received a number of applications, and while I don't know who received what, I do know that all are deserving, and I hope that we can help them fulfill their education wishes a little easier.

Hey, and that's just LAST month. Of course, there's more to come...

Looking ahead we see the 15th annual Las Vegas Conference, set for March 14-16, 2001, again at the Luxor, Las Vegas. The theme this year is "Jackpot Strategies" as we look for ways to let you "play to win" in the Marketing and Opinion Research business. More details as the year progresses...for now, know that we're looking for speakers, volunteers, and if you know how to break the slots...that'll help, too!

Throughout this millennium year (it really does turn over this year, not last year), we'll explore ways to provide you, the member, with services and more "bang for your buck." One way is to ask you. We are planning a survey of members later this fall -- you might want to think ahead as to how to answer. True, you don't know the specific questions, but the general tone is "what can we do for you?" and "what can you do for the chapter?" Don't you wish YOUR surveys could pre-announce like that? Anyway, look for the all-new chapter member survey later this year.

At any time you have a question, request, or issue, just drop me a note at mexinger@clearwater-research.com or call 208-376-3376 ext 195. I'm looking forward to the next 12 months...that are actually 11 and counting...☪

Mike Exinger

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Ambassadors Wanted!

By Mike Exinger

No matter who wins the Presidential elections in November, there are bound to be some choice ambassador positions opening. Here at SW-MRA you don't have to wait until the elections (nor donate a few hundred thousand) to land a first-rate ambassadorship.

At the recent SW-MRA Strategic Planning sessions, we modified the communications patterns to provide for a set of new chapter positions – State Ambassadors. These State Ambassadors will be directly responsible for the close communications and networking that goes on within each of the seven (technically six and a half) states that make up our region.

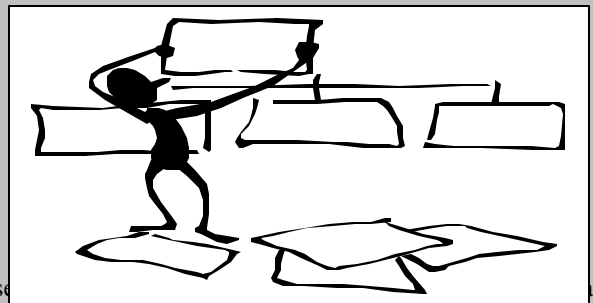
It's a position with lots of benefits (not much work and plenty of contacts). We foresee the State Ambassadors replacing the old Telephone Committee, and can see more benefit to the chapter and members with these positions. For example – the recent "Chapter Celebration" in Austin TX could be duplicated in any one of six other states, lead by the State Ambassador in that region. State Ambassadors can...well, the possibilities are endless. And here's the best part – all seven slots are open!

If you'd like to be considered for a State Ambassador position in Texas, Oklahoma, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, or southern Nevada, please contact me at 208-376-3376 ext 195, or e-mail me at mexinger@clearwater-research.com

ADVERTISE HERE!

The Cactus Call is now accepting advertising. Use this unique tool to reach the "hard to reach" market research professional.. Rates are:

- Per Issue
- 1/8 Page \$30
- 1/4 Page \$50
- 1/2 Page \$75
- 1 Page \$125



10% discount for 3 consecutive issues
January, March, May, July, September, November.

Please contact Robin McClure at (972) 869-2366 for more information or to place an ad. Deadline for the November issue is October 23.

Speakers Wanted!

The 15th Annual Las Vegas Conference will be here before you know it, and we are now in the process of putting together a fantastic program.

And you can help.

The theme this year is "Jackpot Strategies" and it's a back-to-basics theme designed to help you win the game of Marketing Research. We've identified the key issues many researchers face today:

- Labor
- Marketing
- Diversification to Survive
- Low Response Rates

Do you know of someone who would make a great speaker? Are you a great speaker? If so, please contact Mike or any of the SW-MRA board, and we'll consider your suggestion for the Las Vegas podium!

Contact Mike, Elisa or Peggy if you are interested or know someone who is. 🌵

Chapter Celebration Research Blvd.

By Tanya Glover, Interviewer, On-Line Communications

Austin city limits was the destination of fellow market researchers. The Hyatt Regency hosted the Southwest Conference in Austin, Texas this year. Program managers, supervisors and interviewers came to learn and share ideas amongst others in the field.

Although market research divides into many different areas of gathering information, ideas and suggestions are universal. Call centers, focus groups and psychological evaluations of information gathered from surveys are very important to the field of market research.

The posing question: what is market research? The answer is more involved than previously understood. Before a product or advertisements are introduced, a client must know if it will be productive and which quota group will enjoy it. Interviewers, who have the most important job, are gathering information from the populous. Supervisors then report to the client who then decides if the product or advertisement will be productive or not. Interviewers must make it clear to the general population that their opinion *does* count and will be considered for the availability of consumer products and services. Surveys are as crucial as a person's right to vote: Every voice counts in the decision to make change.

Tom O'Connor, On-Line Communications, began the session with his remarks of managing a call center. A manager must wear many hats: psychologist, statistician, cheerleader, rabbi, policeman, enforcer, propagandist, demagogue and teacher. Sounds like a lot of responsibility, doesn't it? A manager's job is very important to keep the respondents, interviewers and clients happy.

A manager or supervisor must keep the call center positive. A negative group will usually suffer from poor performance and a positive group will usually perform extremely well.

Managers must assess every individual constantly. Statistics are used to evaluate violations of calling center standards, training

points, script or questionnaire problems, rebuttal problems, etc. It is the responsibility of a manager to never appear angry or unhappy. It is a difficult job, yes, but it can be accomplished.

Knowing the strengths and weaknesses of the call center must be known to correctly evaluate the situation. Unfortunately, rules have to be enforced. The goal is never terminating anyone for violating the rules. If a full understanding of the rules are communicated well, fewer violations will occur. A manager must make the right decision when a problem occurs. It should always be done in private. Respect of others is always important and no one should be reprimanded in front of anyone else. Otherwise, respect and confidence is lost.

Sharon Mutter, Sharon Mutter Field Services, exhibited knowledge of market research. Owing her own company, she calls the shots. Clients call, inform her of a job, and she decides who can handle it, of course depending on the workload, time and staff. Her job is guaranteeing the client a quality product. The most important is making sure the project meets the specifications, time and budget. She reassured interviewers, that without us, there wouldn't be a job.

Supervisors are key to successful projects. This is achieved through monitoring, validating, editing, status reports and managing the quotas given. Setting up staffing is crucial for all jobs by knowing the type of project given.

The questionnaire must be known and concerns voiced to the supervisors and clients. The key is briefing. Interviewers must know the background and purpose (if given) of each individual survey. Questions have to be understood. Practice interviews between

supervisors (as respondents) and interviewers are the key to understanding the surveys. Monitoring will keep productivity high.

Supervisors want to know the opinions of the respondents and interviewers. To do this, interviewers must speak to the supervisors about their concerns. Daily reports are needed to know if the client's objections are being met. The project has to be in budget and within a deadline. If there are problems with the survey, the client can change the budget or deadline. The only way this can be achieved is keeping in contact with the client. Being pro-active means keeping the project managers informed, offer suggestions, get interviewers input, and document all changes.

In conclusion, Sharon Mutter reminds everyone to just have fun! If it's not fun, then why would anyone enjoy it? 🌵

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 communication with other professionals through newsletters and networking opportunities;
- Promoting chapter membership in all segments of market research, encouraging membership participation through opportunities for involvement;
- Providing leadership and direction to encourage professionalism and excellence within our membership while adhering to the professional standards of the National Marketing Research Association;
- Encouraging understanding and appreciation of marketing research by the general public;
- 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.



Rhonda Turk, Margaret Thomas (seated), Roland Serda



Sharon Mutter

**Scenes from the Chapter Celebration
August 12, 2000
Austin, Texas
41 attendees**



Linda Brazel and Marisol Duncan



Peggy O'Connor, Sharon Mutter, Tom O'Connor



Tammadge Research Employees



Tom O'Connor

Don't Forget about the MRA National Conference in Fort Lauderdale, Florida November 8-10. It is sure to be a great experience!

Quotes from Conference Attendees

"I think this conference was very informative. I enjoyed hearing from other phone departments... we always thought we were the only ones who went through this. I enjoyed myself very much." -- Gina Marie Gomez: Galloway Research

"Both talks were very helpful. Excellent, interesting speakers – very lively and down to earth!" -- Teresa Vollmecke, PhD

"I truly enjoyed this workshop. I'm thrilled to know that some of the suggestions made today are techniques we have been using at our company." --Sonia Craiz: Tammadge Market Research

2000 Financial Statement: Las Vegas Joint Conference

<u>RECEIPTS</u>	<u>Southwest</u>	<u>So. Cal.</u>	<u>No.Cal/Pac.NW</u>	<u>Unaffil/Misc.</u>
Registration	8365.00	5535.00	4350.00	9655.00
Sponsorships	1750.00	2500.00	590.00	
Raffle*	125.00	140.00	150.00	
Raffle Sales**				740.00
Refunds				3961.71
Total				<u>\$37,861.71</u>

*These were strictly cash donations. Items donated were not assigned a monetary value or tracked by chapter.

** Sales put under unaffiliated as it would be impossible to determine by chapter.

On-Site registrations were tracked and are included in the above chapter information.

EXPENDITURES

Supplies and Shipments	\$1099.39
Speakers	\$4396.05
Raffle Charitable Donation (Boulder City Safe House)	\$740.00
Hotel	\$18,000
Raffle Prize Money	\$645
Total	<u>\$24880.44</u>
<u>NET PROFIT</u>	<u>\$12981.27</u>

Profit Distribution by Chapter

Southwest (46.15%)	\$5990.86
Southern California (29.67%)	\$3851.54
Northern California/Pacific Northwest (24.18%)	\$3138.87

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