



Cactus Call

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Southwest Chapter—Marketing Research Association

September 2003

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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:

Melissa Pepper, 512-474-1005, or melissa@tammadge.com

If you wish to place an ad, please call Robin McClure at 972/869-2366, for an order form. Please call by Oct. 1st to place your ad in the November issue.

Message from the President

I am pleased to report that Educational Forum 2003 was a great success. Becky Collins, Kathy Pilhuj, Camille Keith and Kim Larson all did a fabulous job. When attendees were asked to rate the value of the experience, 94.4% rated it in a positive manner. Educational Forum is a great cost effective event with practical information that you can take back and easily apply to your environment. If you were not able to attend this year, we hope you are already marking your calendars for next year's event. Please refer to pages 2 and 4 in this issue for more results from the survey.

Prior to Educational Forum, the board spent two days locked behind closed doors for the annual Strategic Planning meeting. It is at this meeting that we plan the events for the upcoming board year. We spent a lot of time planning Las Vegas and we are very excited about the preliminary planning for this event. We've already settled on a theme....

Discovering Hidden Treasures Follow The Map To Success

The Las Vegas conference will be held at Treasure Island March 3-5, 2004. We already have a great slate of topics so stay tuned for further information as the details fall into place!

Another topic we spent a lot of time on is recruitment and retention of Southwest MRA members. We strive to make this organization and its activities a true benefit to the present and future members. We take pride in belonging to such a great organization and freely volunteer a lot of time and energy to make it an organization you can be proud to be a part of too. However, there are only 14 board members and 250 of you – we can not do it without YOUR input. Please email us, call us and talk to us when you see us at events and let us know what YOU want. An organization is only as good as its members. We need you to be involved – physically and mentally. Together we can bring this organization to a higher level and that is a great step down the path of attracting new members as well as keeping existing ones.

We look forward to hearing from you!

Bobbie Kirkland
SWMRA President



MRA SW CHAPTER- Board for 2003-2004

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**Southwest Chapter 2003 Educational Forum
DALLAS IS A BOOT SCOOTIN' SUCCESS!**

The Southwest Chapter held their 4th Annual Educational Forum in Dallas, Texas in July.

The event kicked off with Boot Scootin' at Billy Bobs, the world's largest honky-tonk, where attendees engaged in line dancing, a scavenger hunt, good food and lots of country entertainment. You simply could not resist the urge to tap your feet and sashay your partner around the dance floor. The SW Board took advantage of the opportunity to climb on top of a high kicking bull for a photo op!

The attendee satisfaction survey used a 5-point scale, with a 5 being strongly agree and a 1 being strongly disagree. Thirty- six (36) attendees responded to the survey. Of the 36 responding, 20 were Southwest Chapter members. There were members from seven other chapters at the forum.

Networking Event / Billy Bob's: Sixty-six percent (66%) of the attendees indicated that the Chapter should continue to offer networking events such as Billy Bob's. Attendee comments were very positive and those who attended enjoyed themselves.

Session Evaluations: Speaker attributes were rated on the same 5-point rating scale. Average session ratings ranged from a low of 3.64 to a high of 4.83. The forum offered four speakers and their combined mean rating is shown in table 1.

Table 1

Session had a Practical Application	Mean 4.27
The Handouts were useful	Mean 4.23
Overall, the session was Valuable to Me	Mean 4.16
I learned Something from this Session	Mean 4.14

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Value of Experience Overall: When asked to rate their agreement with the statement that the conference was a valuable experience, 94.4% of the attendees rated either agreement or strong agreement. There was not a single negative rating on this question. (See Table 2)

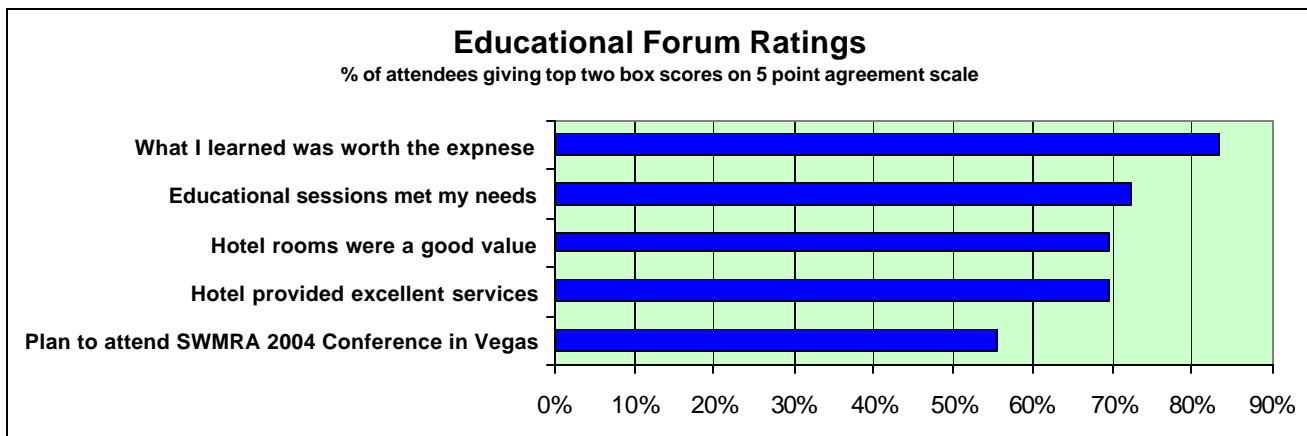
Table 2

Overall This Conference was a Valuable Experience

Rating Scale	Overall
Strongly Agree (5)	55.6%
(4)	38.9%
(3)	5.6%
(2)	0
Strongly Disagree (1)	0

Attendees were also asked to rate their agreement with several other statements about the conference from the conference being worth the expense to the hotel rooms being a good value. The percentages of attendees who indicated agreement to strong agreement (top two boxes) with these statements are shown in chart 1.

Chart 1



Hotel and Accommodations: The Hotel overall did well in the ratings, with 70% rating *Hotel services* in the top two boxes. Although 69% gave top two box agreement to *Hotel rooms were a good value*, the Board sees opportunity for improvement in these ratings for the 2004 Educational Forum. Traditionally, the board has strived to keep Forum costs under \$100.

As the Board plans for the 2004 Las Vegas Conference, it is encouraging to note that 57% of the Forum attendees said that they plan to be in VEGAS! When asked to name a location for future Forums, many cities were mentioned, with Scottsdale, AZ and Utah (not specified) being the top two choices.

Thank you to those in attendance for making our 2003 Educational Forum a successful event. The Board is already busy planning 2005, and the results of the survey will help us to make prudent decisions.

Elisa D. Galloway
Past President SWMRA
Galloway Research Service

Southwest Marketing Research Forum 2003

By Jeff Mapua

Nighttime Supervisor, Tammadge Market Research

Getting up early in the morning was never an easy thing for me to do. I'll admit it. I am just not a morning person. Recently, I had to wake up rather early to go to a conference. Waking at 7:30 am for school was a chore for me in 5th grade and it's a chore for me as a 5th year senior in college. Some things just never change. Attending the Southwest Marketing Research Association Educational Forum 2003 was similar to attending camp in 1992. Both were firsts for me. The ideas are basically the same, but instead of learning archery, I learned how to avoid high turnover rates.

The forum was helpful in multiple ways, and just like camp, what was taught was not what would be remembered. Sure, I still remember how to string a bow or use a compass, and I'll remember different ways to motivate an employee, but it was more important to get an idea of the world beyond my (and company's) own. I had no idea going into camp that there was anything beyond television, school and video games. And similarly I had no idea what was going on beyond the comforts of Tammadge Market Research and Austin, TX. Like a wide-eyed freshman I saw other employees of other research companies, saw different layouts for focus group facilities and different ways of going about the equally satisfying and frustrating business of market research.

It was helpful to share tips and tricks with different people within the industry. Being isolated from others can lead to bad habits and unsuccessful endeavors. However, learning what works and doesn't work in a real environment saves a tremendous amount of time and effort. The greatest upside to this is that market research in general can be focused on progression rather than repetition. The camp counselors wouldn't want children everywhere wasting their time reinventing the wheel and discovering fire.

The experience was definitely worthwhile, something that I would love to do again. I went back to camp the next year and had another rewarding time. Going back to another forum would be just as helpful as it was this year. Some things just never change.

2003-2004 MRA Southwest Chapter Board





Attendees of the Educational Forum held in Dallas in July.

The following companies all made sure that the Educational Forum ended with a bang by hosting a progressive dinner and opening up their facilities to all the attendees.

They even provided transportation.

Dallas Focus
Delve
Murray Hill Center Southwest
Savitz Field and Focus-Dallas

WORKIN' 5 TO 9

by Kathryn O'Shields
Nighttime Supervisor, Tammadge Market Research

Spending a night at the supervisor's desk, right in the middle of the phone room, can be a very interesting experience. You are automatically assumed to be the Person Who Knows Answers to All Questions, no matter how difficult, strange, or absurd those questions may be. Interviewers come up to the desk seeking guidance and advice, with queries such as:

"Can we invite one more 31 to 40 year old to group 1?"

"Will you explain the crazy graph on this screener to me? It doesn't make sense."

"When I called this phone number, I just heard a bunch of rapid beeping sounds. Should I count that as a fax machine?"

"What do I tell this lady who says she's going to sue us for calling after 9pm?"

"Can I leave early tonight?"

"Is there any more sample for my project?"

Other demands come from people calling in to the phone room. The inbound phone is located at the supervisor's desk, just to make the atmosphere there a little *more* hectic.

"I saw your number on my caller ID. What do you want?"

"Can I be screened for the alcoholic beverage study?"

"Take me off your calling list."

"Why are you making phone calls after 9pm? I could sue you!"

"Do y'all have any focus groups I could see if I qualify for? I need some money."

Not only are people expecting the supervisors to know everything, but screeners of qualified completes are turned in to the supervisor's desk to be edited. The process of editing at our company consists of reading over the screener that was just filled out with the respondent's information, looking for errors. Common things you find when looking over a screener are skipped questions, glaring misspellings, unqualified answers, the word "dot" or "underscore" mistakenly spelled out in an e-mail address, indecipherable handwriting, doodles and drawings in margins, and coffee stains. Armed with only a blue correction pen, you must clean up the mess, often needing to take the screener back to its owner to ask, "What does this mean exactly?" or "Why is this question blank?" or, in the worst cases, "You didn't actually *invite* this person to the focus group, did you?"

In addition, the supervisors at the desk must juggle the many quota boards for the current projects being recruited. This task is especially daunting when completes are being turned in at the supervisor's desk at a rapid rate. Each completes specifications must be recorded on the quota board to keep track of the mix of respondents being invited to the group.

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

Inevitably two completes come in at the same time for the same project that close the same quota. Inevitably a quota closes but, before you can tell the interviewers, another respondent is invited who fills that same quota. Inevitably you notice a math error on the quota board as you record a new complete. Inevitably you are distracted by a question or phone call in the middle of recording a complete, then look back to your work to realize you can't tell where you left off.

Although spending a night at the supervisor's desk is often stressful, with questions to be answered, screeners to be edited, and information to be put on the quota board (usually all at once), it is rewarding to know that, by shift's end, there are a few questions answered and errors corrected because you were there. The responsibilities required at the supervisor's desk are essential to keeping the phone room flowing smoothly, and it is both a challenge and a pleasure to be the person sitting up there in the middle of the action.

Board Member Bio



Biography:

Tony Soares manages ISA's Dallas/Fort Worth client service office. He has been with ISA since May of 2002. Tony is responsible for new business development, study pricing, project scheduling, and client relationship management. At the same time, he lends his own research expertise to each of his clients' projects. Throughout Tony's 15+ years in the marketing research data collection industry, he has served in a variety of capacities including interviewer/data collector, mall supervisor, field manager, telephone center manager, Field Director, General Manager, Account Executive, and client service representative. Tony's career began with Friedman Marketing of Harrison, NY. He is a member of the Marketing Research Association (MRA) and American Marketing Association (AMA).

2003 SWMRA Member Needs Survey Results

Anna Behle, Texas A&M University, Summer Intern, Galloway Research Service

The results are in from the 2003 MRA Southwest Chapter Needs Assessment Survey! Sixty-four members took the time to fill out this questionnaire with topics such as the Las Vegas Conference, Cactus Call, Chapter Celebration, Chapter Communications, and more. A special thank you to Ted Kendall, Qualtalk and his committee. We appreciate all who participated in this survey. We hope to make your experiences better because of your input.

Membership

First, the respondents had been members of the Southwest Chapter for an average of 2.80 years. Overall, the percentages broke down as follows:

How many years have you been a member of the Southwest Chapter?	
1 or less	24.0%
2-4	25.3%
5-7	21.3%
8-10	5.3%
11 or more	24.0%

Respondents were asked their reason for being a member of the Southwest chapter and the top two responses were “It is part of my overall MRA membership package” (44.2%) and “I want to network with other firms/members” (33.7%). The total percentage can be seen in the following table.

Why are you a Southwest Chapter member?	
It is part of my overall MRA membership package	44.2%
I want to network with other firms/members	33.7%
I want to attend the annual Las Vegas Conference	11.5%
Company pays for it, no real reason	5.8%
Other	4.8%

Other reasons specified were “To keep the industry united”, “Chapter membership is important!”, “Hoping to get connections to drum up business”, and “Simply to support the association.”

Cactus Call

As for the Cactus Call, respondents were asked how thoroughly they read each issue. Most members seem to be reading the newsletter with the majority (66%) saying they either “read each issue thoroughly” or “skim through each issue, reading some parts.” The total breakdown is as follows:

Which of the following best describes how you read the Cactus Call?	
I read each issue thoroughly	28.8%
I skim through each issue, reading some parts	37.0%
I skim through each issue	11.0%
I sometimes read or skim through issues	17.8%
I usually do not read the issues I receive	4.1%
Other	1.4%

Having been asked to rate the Cactus Call on a scale from 1 to 5 with 1 being “low” and 5 being “high” the respondents averaged a 3.51 with an overwhelming majority choosing a 3 (47.8%) or a 4 (34.3%).

Using a scale from 1-5, with 1 being low and 5 being high, how would you rate the Cactus Call?	
1- low	1.5%
2	4.5%
3	47.8%
4	34.3%
5- high	11.9%

Respondents were then asked to suggest topics they would like to see covered in the Cactus Call. Suggestions were:

- ?? Personal profiles/news from research firms & members in the area (5 total)
- ?? Online Research/Interviewing (4 total)
- ?? Educational topics (3 total)
- ?? General marketing research rules/ recent developments (2 total)
- ?? Creating new business in the current economy (2 total)
- ?? Interviewer recruitment/retention (2 total)
- ?? Research anecdotes (2 total)
- ?? Panel Development
- ?? Anything dealing with phone banks
- ?? Lobbying and legal issues
- ?? Clip art for research proposals/reports
- ?? Best incentives to boost response
- ?? Joint networking techniques
- ?? Salaries in the SW market in our industry
- ?? Lease and space negotiations and going rates in various cities in SW
- ?? Technical issues
- ?? Recent hires
- ?? Job opportunities

Respondents were also asked for suggestions or improvements to the Cactus Call. These responses were:

- ?? Learning more about the members in the chapter/regional offices (3 total)
- ?? More depth/serious topics (3 total)
- ?? Names of people in pictures (2 total)
- ?? Clearer pictures (2 total)
- ?? Make the stories more interesting to a qualitative researcher
- ?? Shorter articles with useful tidbits
- ?? Problems experienced in the area and how they have been solved
- ?? Color
- ?? Better job with advertising
- ?? Cover changes in industry (i.e. no call lists, how research is changing)
- ?? More pictures of activities/fun stuff
- ?? Back issues available online, option of receiving Cactus Call online
- ?? More articles/less announcements

Also, 24.2% of the respondents said they would be interested in advertising in the Cactus Call.

Overall SWMRA Experience

Lastly, respondents were asked to rate their overall MRA Southwest Chapter experience on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being low and 5 being high. Members seem to be pleased with the chapter overall with 90% rating their experience a 3 or higher.

The breakdown was as follows:

Using a scale from 1-5, with 1 being low and 5 being high, how would you rate your overall MRA Chapter experience ?	
1- low	4.3%
2	5.7%
3	42.9%
4	27.1%
5- high	20.0%

Only 16.2% indicated that they had needs that the chapter was not currently fulfilling. Some were:

- ?? More conferences/meetings in Phoenix area (3 total)
- ?? More programs in Denver
- ?? Local events
- ?? At annual conference have chapter get together to meet other chapter members
- ?? Do not ignore requests for a member to be included on list of possible board members
- ?? More benefits for students without high expenses
- ?? Some type of regular meeting- if only by state groupings
- ?? Education, workshops, seminars, group discussions, e-mail forums, newsletters- information about the latest ways to perform market research to maximize your client’s budget. More geared to teach businesses how to maximize their potential

Thank you so much to the 64 respondents for sharing your opinions! More feedback will be coming soon on what you had to say about the 2003 Las Vegas Joint Conference and the Educational Forum in San Antonio.

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On the Way

By J. Patrick Galloway

Long ago in 1989, a marketing researcher named Barry Sinrod published the results of a national survey entitled: *The First Really Important Survey of American Habits*. Barry decided to use quantitative research techniques to find statistically accurate answers to questions about our personal habits. You know, the everyday habits that each of us has that often annoy other people of differing habitual routines (i.e. spouses). For perhaps the first time in the history of probability sampling, Barry surveyed the nation to find out how many of us squeeze the toothpaste tube at the end, middle and top, and whether we put the top back on always, frequently or never. He found out just how many of us mount our toilet paper to unroll “over the top and front” vs. “down behind against the wall.” Barry’s survey asked almost everything from “what people use to clean their belly buttons” to whether they had ever cheated on their spouse. He helped us understand how different we all are in the little daily living habits about which many of us often feel that our way is the “correct” way. Barry’s book is still available through online bookstores for those of you who missed it. Here’s one place where you can find it: www.allbookstores.com.

Well, I’ve been thinking that with the past two-year slump in the research profession and the ho-hum state of the economy. Many of us have lost our sense of what’s really fun about our business: the ability for *each of us* to find out about *all of us* by just asking a specially selected *few of us* what we want to know. We need to inject some levity back into the marketing research business. We should be asking people the questions that we all *really want answered!* Now come onthink! What is it we really want to find out let’s ask the American people for the answers to those nagging questions that will wake them up, shake them from their worries about the state of the world and make them *think!* I propose that we get together and share the expense of conducting the first national survey of *American Trivial Concerns*. With that in mind, I’d like to submit my personal list of questions I’d like to see the answers to:

- 1) Why is there an expiration date on SOUR cream?
- 2) What was the best thing BEFORE there was sliced bread?
- 3) What is another word for synonym?
- 4) Why are there Braille instructions on drive through ATM machines?
- 5) How is it possible to have a civil war?
- 6) If two airplanes land safely after a “near miss” what happens to two that experience a “near hit?”
- 7) When you go to the park, why do you never see any baby pigeons?
- 8) Why does the word “lisp” have an “s” in it?
- 9) Is there anyone out there who really can kiss his or her own elbow?
- 10) How do you explain the concept of “counter-clockwise” to a kid with a digital watch?

I’m sure that each of you have your own set of survey questions you’d like to see answered. How about it? Send me your survey questions and let me know if you or your company would like to help out. It’s time we put a little jocularly back in marketing research and had some fun. Don’t you think? After all, as Ogden Nash once said, “Don’t take life too seriously. You’ll never get out of it alive.”

If you have an idea or questions for a fun research project or even a favorite story you would like to share, contact Patrick Galloway at Galloway Research 210-734-4346 or email jpgalloway@gallowayresearch.com.

Mission Statement

The Southwest Chapter of the Marketing Research Associations 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 with other professionals through newsletters, networking opportunities, meetings and conferences;
- ?? Promoting chapter membership in all segments 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 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

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