

MARKETING RESEARCH - TIME FOR A MAKEOVER?

Dr Ooi Giok Ling recently asked this question of a full house at the Market Research Society breakfast talk (at the Inter-Continental Hotel on 18th March). Isn't it time to reassess the position of market research, an old and established field, in society and re-examine the current role it plays?



Our guest speaker was speaking on **"Face-off: Market Research, Business and Society of Challenges faced by**

market research in establishing a role in society and for the business sector."

Dr. Ooi, spoke of the challenges faced by market research in establishing a role in society and for the business sector. Based on past research, Dr. Ooi believes there is too much emphasis on the bottom-line. With few tenders and high competition, many tenders are driven too low. There needs to be discussion, she said, on developing an understanding of the bottom-line, reduce the focus on cash flow and in turn increase the value to the client.



The second argument she put forward was that the image of market research is shaped by the goals of the client, unlike social research, which is driven by the search for scientific knowledge for teaching and publishing. Ideals /ideology have a major influence, and published works in social science have changed the world and life around us. She felt that there is a reluctance from business and society to view R&D as important.

Dr. Ooi believes there is a lot to be gained by establishing a relationship between market research and social research. Currently, these two fields are suspicious of each other, which benefit neither side. She believes academics and market researchers should learn how to work together and develop awareness that research is an indispensable tool.

"Each has their own strengths. As a team, we could potentially provide superior results to our clients. We need to create the type of synergy that will be beneficial to all." she said.

Among the many reasons for cooperation she described, social science can have a more practical outcome; market research can be better informed by the knowledge gained from research conducted by academics/scholars; research can be more timely and accessible to society. Market research provides an avenue for the use of social science research - currently, not a lot is published - and will also ensure it is 'grounded' in reality. Market research firms have the resources; market research can leverage off published works and strengthen the application of such work.

To facilitate this relationship, Dr Ooi said we need to develop a way to package the knowledge of the public sector so it gains greater credibility. We would also need to loosen the restraints on access to this knowledge, as it deserves to be public knowledge.

Dr. Ooi is currently Associate Professor at the National Institute of Education and Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies.



Synovate Limited Acquires UK Market Research Business "The Research Business International"

Synovate Limited ("Synovate"), a company forming part of the "Synovate" division of the Aegis Group plc (Stock: AGS.L on the London Exchange) announced today that it has acquired the business trading as "The Research Business International" from a US based group of companies headed by Maritz Inc..

Based in London, TRBI is one of the UK's largest market research companies, with core strengths in brand and advertising tracking, market studies, segmentation, brand and concept development, and research in specialist areas including healthcare, financial services and the youth market.

"We are very excited that TRBI is now part of Synovate. Such a strong business significantly bolsters Synovate's research presence in the UK, which is one of the most important research markets in the world", said Synovate

Worldwide CEO, Adrian Chedore. "The addition of TRBI further enhances our ability to meet client needs through the wealth of qualitative and quantitative research expertise and solutions that TRBI offers".

Laurence Curtis, Chief Executive and Joint Managing Director of TRBI commented: "We are delighted to join such a dynamic company, particularly at this exciting stage in their development. The combination of two such strong players, with some of the best minds in the research world, will significantly strengthen our ability to deliver top quality research insights for both domestic and international clients". Synovate will move quickly to integrate TRBI, whilst also ensuring that TRBI's business retains the unique strengths that have underpinned its success so far.

CONTRIBUTED BY SYNOVATE

SOUMYA ROMANCES CLIENTS IN SINGAPORE



RESEARCH INTERNATIONAL - Dr. Soumya Roy, Global Leader of Research International's Customer Relationship Management (CRM) Business Practice, was in Singapore in February to reveal findings from a new self-funded CRM study entitled 'True Romance – Delivering Real Customer Relationships'. The study answered key CRM questions addressing customer profitability, retention, share of wallet, up-sell and cross-sell issues across CPG, retail, automotive, financial services, IT and telecommunication industries.

From this study, Research International has developed a new metric-based approach, which represents the "next generation" of CRM research, and takes into account competitive performance, providing gap analyses, links to ROI, and identifies items required to tap into the existing customer base and move beyond satisfaction to "true romance" with your customer.

For more details of this study, please Contact either Serene Wong s.wong@research-int.com or Craig Griffin cr.griffin@research-int.com

TRAINING SEMINARS

For the past few years, the MRSS has been running training programs for the market research community in Singapore, and these have been quite successful so far. Basic and/or advanced courses of 3 or 4 sessions have been conducted by experienced market research professionals, targeting both market research practitioners and buyers.

This year the format has been changed somewhat and as many as 16 'seminars' have been offered, covering a wide range of topics, from multivariate analysis techniques to writing marketing research proposals. People can now 'cherry pick' the seminars they want to attend, at the special low MRSS rates.

The venue has also changed to the YMCA off Orchard Road. Those on the lookout for a suitable seminar can consult the list below.

(Also available the MRSS website)

Marketing research in marketing management (Basic)	Apr 6
Initiating the research process (Basic)	Apr 13
Concept/Product testing research (Advanced)	Apr 20
Quantitative Research Methods (Basic)	Apr 27
Qualitative Research Methods (Basic)	May 4
Advertising Research (Advanced)	May 11
Designing Questionnaires (Basic)	May 18
Advertising and Brand Health Tracking Research (Advanced)	May 25
Market Segmentation Research (Advanced)	Jun 1
Qualitative Moderators Workshop (Basic)	Jun 8
Types of projective techniques & beyond FDGs (Advanced)	Jun 15
Basic Quantitative Data Analysis (Basic)	Jun 22
Strategic Analysis of Qualitative Focus Groups (Advanced)	Jun 29
Pricing Research (Advanced)	Jul 6
Multivariate analysis (Advanced)	Jul 13
Customer Satisfaction Research (Advanced)	Jul 20



AC Nielsen Announces Major Appointment Sum Yim Ling Becomes Regional Client Director for Asia Pacific



SINGAPORE, March 15, 2004 – AC Nielsen announced today the appointment of Ms Sum Yim Ling as Regional Client Director, Asia Pacific. In her new capacity, Ms Sum will lead the effort in providing strategic, proactive and value added services to regional clients, and assisting local country to deliver high quality services. Prior to her new role, Ms Sum had been the Executive Director for AC Nielsen Customized Research Services in Singapore for 5 years.

A veteran in market research and client servicing, Ms Sum possess a wealth of local and international experience. In 1993, she spearheaded the start-up of the research joint venture for AC Nielsen in Guangzhou, China, after which she relocated to Hong Kong office and became the Associate Director specializing in Quantitative Research. Before joining AC Nielsen, Ms Sum was the regional research director for Reader's Digest, Asia Pacific. Ms Sum will continue to be based in Singapore and will report to Richard Basil-Jones, Managing Director, Regional Client Management, Asia Pacific. "Yim Ling's new assignment further reinforces our ongoing commitment to driving client service excellence as well as developing exemplary client service professionals in the region." Commented Mr. Basil-Jones.



NEW APPOINTMENTS

SINGAPORE, March 2004 – It was announced by TNS Singapore, Managing Director, Mr Grant Bertoli the appointment of Ms Melanie Ng, Director and Mr Suprio Banerjee, Assoc Director.



Melanie is rejoining the TNS group after a few years 'on the dark side'. She has extensive experience in all aspects of qualitative and quantitative research, which span

the tele-communications, IT, FMCG, health-care, media, and retail sectors. Melanie brings with her a unique blend of research expertise and marketing 'pragmatism' that has assisted her clients in gaining superior consumer insights.

Suprio joins TNS from RI with market research experience in the FMCG, Automotive, Financial and Telecom sectors. Suprio has an interesting background, covering research across twenty five different countries. Most recently, he has been working in Singapore and prior to this role Suprio was at NFO in the Middle East.

His research technical knowledge is very strong and enjoys providing solutions to the clients' issues in an actionable and result oriented way.



Both Melanie and Suprio bring unique sets of skills to the organisation which will compliment the current research teams, with the aim of continued growth in our key sectors.

Melanie and Suprio will join TNS on March 8 and 15 consecutively.