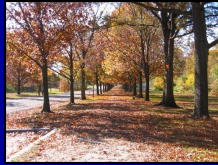




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IMA Links



Beyond the Golden Veil:

The pitfalls of conducting research in your own backyard

by Gwyn Gibbs

Gwyn's article appeared in the *Quirk's* e-newsletter in July. For more information, feel free to call Gwyn directly at 610-527-5500.

Because of today's busy research pipelines and already crowded shelves, research departments are challenged to generate and strengthen their products at a breakneck pace. With limited budgets and collapsed time lines, market research departments are being squeezed tighter than ever before. Even for the seasoned market research veterans who know all too much how important market research is, creating and testing hypotheses becomes a sprint to uncover insights and forge ahead.

In this climate, to be quicker and more cost effective is often the only way that any research can get the go-ahead. As a result, a common low-cost and fast solution is conducting research locally or even in-house. As expected, the ability to recruit nearby or 'captive' participants at a low cost with minimal incentives has become enticing. Recruits can be secured in little time and cancellation rates are minimal. Understandably, conducting research in a client company's home city or even at the corporate location means less time out of the office and no travel expenses for the market research folks. Justly, with materials being changed on the spot, conducting research locally provides seamless updates and changes to stimuli. With all that said, why wouldn't you conduct research in your own backyard?



The answer is simple: **Bias**. Respondents recruited from the area near a client company's corporate location often have a geographic bias because they are in that company's backyard. Often it is a positive company bias, but it may also be negative. Nonetheless, it is a bias. Alternately, securing participants from within the company, despite asking them to forget that they are in their employer's conference room, is riddled with bias. Bias that the company's products are great, bias that they are being observed by their employer, bias that their employer may see their responses in a negative light and retaliate, bias from a disgruntled respondent that the company's products are not useful. The list goes on and on. Bias is inherent in the design.

Good market research cannot exist where such bias thrives. Market research in its true nature is called upon to be as objective as possible, masking participant names, blinding stimuli, accessing a geographic cross section, and eliciting responses from a diverse set of respondents. Limiting the geography of the research will limit the insights.

Bias?

All is not lost with backyard research, as it can provide quick and cost-effective information for some preliminary hypotheses in order to help a team fine tune the stimuli. BUT, backyard research must be followed up by a broader research strategy in order to be of any meaningful value in guiding strategic next steps for a brand. So go ahead, throw a backyard barbeque — but don't forget to build in time and money to serve up your domestic and global markets. Your product deserves it !



Eat This - It's Good for You!

by Patti Kaiser



We all know how important diet is to our overall health. But come on - admit it - when we hear that a food is "good for you", we sometimes revert to childish suspicion and turn up our noses, passing over what we know to be "healthy" options.



But just because something is good for you doesn't mean it can't be fun to eat as well. Look at the health benefits of dark chocolate, for example. Chocolate contains flavanols - antioxidants that help counteract pesky free radicals. Regular intake of dark chocolate has been shown to lower blood pressure and LDL cholesterol. It affects serotonin levels, which in turn stimulates endorphin production, which acts as a natural anti-depressant and can just make you feel good. Components of chocolate fight tooth decay and cancer and help clean up arterial plaque. Chocolate can help protect the brain from stroke, and provide a magnesium boost that helps regulate the digestive, neurological and cardiovascular systems.

If that's not fun and healthy enough for you, how about adding a glass of red wine? Regular, moderate consumption of red wine has been shown to lower the risk of heart attack and heart disease, as well as decrease the risk of type 2 diabetes and stroke. Red wine also reduces the risk of cataracts and colon cancer and slows brain decline.



And then there's naturally sweet and colorful fruit. Gorgeous red cherries - like other fruits, contain Vitamin C, antioxidants and fiber - which provide many benefits to most of the systems of the body, such as digestive, immune and cardiovascular.

Given all of these great health benefits from really fun foods, what could be better than a treat that combines them all into one? Check out the recipe below!

Chocolate Cherry Merlot Brownies

Ingredients:

1 1/2 cups dried cherries
 1 cup merlot wine
 4 oz semi-sweet chocolate
 4 oz dark chocolate (60% cocoa)
 1 1/3 cups flour
 1/2 tsp salt
 1/3 cup butter, room temperature
 1 cup sugar
 2 large eggs
 2 tsp vanilla extract

Directions:

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a 9-inch square baking pan.

Place dried cherries in a large bowl.

Over med-high heat, warm merlot till just boiling.

Pour wine over cherries; soak for about 20 minutes.

Drain cherries and discard wine (or maybe wait till it cools and drink it!)

Melt chocolate (in microwave, double boiler, or in a bowl placed over a pan of boiling water). Stir chocolate as it melts, keeping an eye on it to make sure it doesn't scorch. Melt chocolate till it is smooth and creamy.

Using a mixer, cream butter and sugar till light and fluffy. Add eggs and vanilla and beat another minute. Add melted chocolate and beat until smooth.

Add flour and salt, mixing well for another minute.

With mixer running on low, add cherries to batter and mix till moderately incorporated.

Pour batter into prepared pan and bake for 20-30 minutes, or till tester inserted in the middle of the brownies comes out clean.

The Perils of Numbers in Qualitative Research

by Michael Kay

Imagine this: a presentation of a qualitative research project is going well. The findings are valuable. Then the slide comes up with a table showing that 22% of physicians in the study would not switch from the three-doses-per-day brand with bad side effects to your once-a-day brand that is really well-tolerated. Someone in the audience says "22%! That's crazy! How can this be?" and suddenly the room is buzzing with anxiety. Now it has to be explained, but one important person ducks out to take a call, and misses it. All they remember is this glaring number, which they pass along to someone else.

Such are the perils of numbers in the qualitative setting. Though there can be caveats on every page of a report, it is very difficult not to project numeric data onto the wider population, and not just look at the qualitative research directionally.

Numbers are seductive: they sound so certain, and they reduce messy clouds of language, all the "well, I might use it, IF..." or "I would definitely switch, UNLESS..." into a simple yes or no. And they drown out all the subtle, nuanced information that qualitative research provides.

In this case, that the 22% represents only 2 out of 9 respondents who were asked a particular question isn't mentioned, or that the whole sample was only 25 physicians, and not randomly selected. The numbers were just used as a handy way of tracking some responses to stimuli, and of giving direction into things to investigate in future research. Certainly they do not support any kind of conclusion without reference to the qualitative data.

Perhaps those two respondents raised objections worth considering, or maybe they are outliers who would be thrown out of a quantitative analysis. The context is everything. WHY they are saying they will not switch is really more important than WHETHER they'll switch. Of course the explanation is there in the report, but it doesn't stand out the way the numbers in the table do.

Sometimes we at IMA propose using ratings or rankings in our qualitative projects. They can be useful tools for keeping track of trends or having a shorthand way of illustrating findings. But keep in mind that we only use them directionally. The numbers are there to enhance the qualitative findings, not trump them. They have a heavy center of gravity; it's important that they don't end up sinking the research.

It Ain't Necessarily So

(A selection from Wikipedia's "List of Common Misconceptions")

The Great Wall of China is not visible from the moon, or even from 200 miles up.

People use far more than 10% of their brains.

There is no evidence that Vikings wore horns on their helmets.

The Pilgrim Fathers who settled Plymouth Colony did not dress in black, wear buckles or black steeple hats.

Swallowed chewing gum does not take 7 years to digest but passes through the system like anything else.

Bats are not blind.

Hair and fingernails do not continue to grow after death; skin shrivels and shrinks back, causing an appearance of hair and nail growth.

Waking sleepwalkers does them no harm.

Heat loss through the head is no more significant than other unclothed parts of the body.

There is no reason why lightning shouldn't strike the same place more than once. Lightning strikes the Empire State Building about 100 times a year.



IMA in The Spotlight

In recent months, IMA has celebrated three significant anniversaries!

- Patti Kaiser - 10 years (June)
- Michael Kay - 5 years (August)
- Drew Cutler - 10 years (October)

Michael Kay and his family are thrilled to welcome their new daughter, Nurit Jules Kay, born September 3, 2011.

Please visit our website:
www.imalink.com



MEDICAL TERMINOLOGY

SHIFTING DULLNESS

A sign of free, accumulated fluid in the abdomen wherein the dullness of percussion shifts, generally from one side to the other, as the patient is turned from side to side.

Such an accumulation of peritoneal fluid is typically associated with cirrhosis and severe liver disease. This condition was known archaically as “abdominal dropsy.”

Memorable Days in September

- 9/1:** World War II began with the Nazi invasion of Poland, 1939
- 9/2:** Japan signed the surrender terms aboard the *USS Missouri*, ending the war in the Pacific, 1945
- 9/3:** Viking II landed on Mars, 1976
- 9/4:** George Eastman received a patent for roll-film camera, 1888
- 9/5:** The First Continental Congress was established, 1774
- 9/6:** Baltimore Orioles Cal Ripken, broke Lou Gehrig’s record by playing in his 2131st consecutive professional baseball game, 1995
- 9/7:** Queen Elizabeth I was born in Greenwich, England, 1533
- 9/8:** Margaret Gorman, from Washington, D.C., was crowned the first Miss America, in Atlantic City, NJ, 1921
- 9/9:** Singer Elvis Presley made his first appearance on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, 1956
- 9/10:** Elias Howe received a patent for his sewing machine, 1847
- 9/11:** The Beatles recorded their first single, *Love Me Do*, 1962
- 9/12:** The House of Bishops of the U.S. Protestant Episcopal Church voted to delete the word *obey* from the marriage service, 1922
- 9/13:** New York City was declared temporary United States capital, 1788
- 9/14:** Francis Scott Key wrote his poem, *Defense of Ft. McHenry*, that was later renamed *Star Spangled Banner*, 1814
- 9/15:** A federal grand jury indicted the five people originally accused of burglary in the Watergate break-in, 1972

- 9/16:** Plymouth Pilgrims left England on the *Mayflower*, 1620
- 9/17:** The American Professional Football Assoc., precursor of the National Football League, was formed, 1920
- 9/18:** The first edition of *The New York Times* was published, 1851
- 9/19:** The first underground atomic explosion occurred at the proving grounds near Las Vegas, NV, 1957
- 9/20:** Patent leather was first manufactured in U.S. by Seth Boyden in Newark, NJ, 1819
- 9/21:** Sandra Day O’Connor was appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court, 1981
- 9/22:** *Fiddler on the Roof* opened on Broadway, 1964
- 9/23:** Caesar Augustus was born in Rome, 63 B.C.
- 9/24:** The first transatlantic telephone cable system began operation, 1956
- 9/25:** The Bill of Rights passed in the US Senate, 1791
- 9/26:** Seoul, the capital of South Korea, was recaptured by US troops during the Korean War, 1950
- 9/27:** The first passenger train went into operation in England, 1825
- 9/28:** William I, known as the “Conqueror” invaded England, claiming the English throne, 1066
- 9/29:** The United States regular army was established, 1789
- 9/30:** Actor James Byron Dean died at age 24 from injuries received in a car crash, 1955