



# The Verbatim

Newsletter of the Minnesota/Upper Midwest Chapter of the MRA

Spring 2010

Volume 13 Issue 2

## President's Corner

*Gayle Belkengren, 2009 – 2010 Chapter President*

Well, I can't let this opportunity to praise the 2009 – 2010 board pass me by. I don't think I've served on any volunteer board of any organization that has accomplished so much in just a year. (And I've been on a few volunteer boards in my time: political, church, and school.) Led by our committee chairs, we've digested TWO surveys – one for the programming committee, driven by Michele Hanson, and one for the membership committee, driven by Josh Holly. From those surveys, we've developed an action plan for next year that should address many of your member concerns. We also launched our sponsorship program, a new mentoring program for new members and a new website committee with a new webmaster. We tried and learned from our first webinars. Not to mention the TEN educational programs that were offered this year, which includes the innovative "Views from the Top" leadership interview series. Our membership committee has kept our membership stable in this economy; we added 13 new members. And the chapter was recognized by national as being one of the top chapters for new members during the membership drive this year. I know that Danelle Gorra, 2010 – 2011 President and the new board will continue to be innovative. I've sincerely enjoyed being your president during this turbulent economy, and will continue to volunteer in any way that I can be useful. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for this opportunity to meet so many talented and productive people in this organization. It has been an honor and a privilege, and I have grown a lot in this last year, and I hope you have too. We are truly blessed.

## 2010 Upcoming Events

**Conference – Full Day Event  
September 16 – watch for details!**

**Leadership Breakfast Series:  
*Views from the Top*  
3 more Sessions Oct – Dec 2010**

*Keep checking the calendar and home page on [www.mnmra.org](http://www.mnmra.org)!!*

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## 2010-2011 Board Installed

On May 4, 2010, at the Annual Meeting held at Majors Sports Café in Bloomington, our new 2010 – 2011 Chapter Board was installed. Past President Dave Koch of Adapt Data Services conducted the installation. Your new Board is:

President	Danelle Gorra	Delve
President Elect	Jeanine Hesse	Questar
Past President	Gayle Belkengren	
Treasurer	Cheryl Powers,	The Research Edge
	PRC	
Secretary	Amy Gehring	
Director at Large	Rob Daves	Daves & Associates Research
Director at Large	Michele Hanson	Readex Research
Director at Large	Josh Holly	Satisfaction Management Systems

The new Board's first official meeting, combining with the 2009 – 2010 Board for a joint meeting to transfer knowledge, was held on June 4, 2010. Gayle Belkengren, as outgoing President, thanked all 2009 – 2010 Board members with a gift as a memento of their year on the Board and a personal note to each Board member. Departing Board members are Julie Heise of Harris Interactive, John Schamber of MarketLine Research, and Tammie Frost-Norton of Frost & Sullivan.



### Energize Your Market Research Career

*At the Live MN/Upper Midwest  
MRA Fall Conference*  
September 16, 2010  
Earle Brown Heritage Center  
Brooklyn Center, MN

## 2010 – 2011 MRA MN/Upper Midwest Chapter Board Members

### President

Danelle Gorra  
Delve  
952-858-1550  
danelle.gorra@delve.com

### President Elect

Jeanine Hesse  
Questar  
651-688-1932  
jhesse@questarweb.com

### Past President

Gayle Belkengren  
612-925-3492  
gbelkengren@aol.com

### Treasurer

Cheryl Powers, PRC  
The Research Edge  
Cheryl@theresearchedge.com

### Secretary

Amy Gehring  
amygehring@yahoo.com

### Director at Large

Rob Daves  
Daves & Associates Research  
612-822-0085  
rob@davesandassociates.com

### Director at Large

Michele Hanson  
Readex Research  
651-439-6415  
mhanson@readexresearch.com

### Director at Large

Josh Holly  
Satisfaction Management Systems  
952-939-4304  
jholly@satmansys.com

# Chapter Service Award 2009 Winner – Jeanine Hesse, Questar

Jeanine Hesse is an enthusiastic advocate for the Minnesota/Upper Midwest Chapter. Her volunteer contributions are instrumental in ensuring the Chapter's ongoing commitment to providing its members with an amazing array of programming events every year, as well as a balanced budget!

Jeanine ventured into volunteer activities in 2002 as a member of the Programming Committee. As many a volunteer has discovered, one thing can easily lead to another, and in 2006 she took on responsibility for chairing the committee. During this time she was also a key contributor to the Publicity Committee's tasks and activities, providing the design and content layout for electronic and collateral mailing pieces promoting events.

The Minnesota/Upper Midwest Chapter has benefited tremendously over the past seven years from Jeanine's involvement in its Conference planning. Jeanine keeps the Conference Programming Committee on task as they attend to the vast number of planning details that accompany a successful conference event. Her oversight ensures that deadlines are met for booking site locations, making meal arrangements, acquiring speaker information and speaker gifts, drafting and distributing event invitations, and tracking details for the Membership Committee's event registration needs. Leading up to the 2009 Spring Conference in May, her experience in event coordination was an invaluable asset in the preparations.

In the spring of 2009, Jeanine went through training to learn how to update the Chapter's recently redesigned website and spent a year being responsible for keeping the Home and Calendar pages of the site current.

Given the knowledge of the Chapter she has accumulated over her years of volunteer service and her close attention to the wide range of details that come with Programming event preparations, Jeanine has become one of the chapter's most trusted go-to people for getting things done.

Her commitment to the Chapter, along with her results-driven nature, organizational skills and leadership abilities did not go unnoticed by the Chapter's Nominating Committee when looking for dedicated, energetic individuals to take on positions on the 2009 – 2010 Board of Directors. From May 2009 to 2010, Jeanine stepped up for the role of the Chapter's

Treasurer – and, no surprise, was just elected and sworn in as our President Elect for 2010 to 2011.

Jeanine is PRC certified and brings over 12 years of survey research experience to her role on the Board. As a Senior Account Manager for Questar in Eagan, Minnesota, she serves as a customer liaison and drives the activities of internal departments and external partners involved in the delivery of customer satisfaction programs for some of Questar's largest and nationally recognized accounts.

One might think that servicing Fortune 500 clients and chipping away at a never-ending MRA Chapter to-do list is enough to fill one's day. Not for Jeanine – she is mom to two energetic toddler twin boys. During her moments of "down time," she continues her course work at Academy College in Bloomington, Minnesota, and volunteers for the March of Dimes.

The Minnesota/Upper Midwest Chapter is proud of Jeanine Hesse and all of her accomplishments and is pleased to award her the 2009 Chapter Service Award.

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## New Programming Committee Chair

Our Chapter is pleased to announce our new Programming Chair, **Julie Bartell**. Julie has been a member of the programming committee for over a year. When she was a new attendee at the monthly committee meetings (meetings including continental breakfast graciously hosted by Fieldwork on France Avenue), Julie volunteered to help find a location for an event and quickly became our facility coordinator for all events. Her great eye for detail and impeccable follow-through have made her invaluable to the committee. We are delighted she accepted the invitation to become Committee Chair.

When Julie is not busy volunteering, she is the Coding Manager for Adapt Data Services. Many thanks to Adapt for committing the time for Julie to volunteer!



## Legislative Update

### MRA Helps Legalize Exit Polling at Voting Places in Minnesota

By Howard Fienberg, PLC, MRA

Until recently, it was illegal for survey and opinion researchers to conduct exit polling at Minnesota voting places. Following a 2008 lawsuit by the National Election Pool (made up of ABC, the Associated Press, CNN, CBS, Fox News, and NBC), the Minnesota legislature sought to correct the law – and MRA helped them accomplish this task.

#### The Law

The previous Minnesota law (Minnesota Statutes 2008, section 204C.06, subdivision 1) did not allow anyone “except an election official or an individual who is waiting to register or to vote” near a voting place. The new law, H.F.3108, signed by the governor on April 1, adds to that exception, “or an individual who is conducting exit polling” and defines exit polling as “approaching voters in a predetermined pattern as they leave the polling place after they have voted and asking voters to fill out an anonymous, written questionnaire.”

#### What are Exit Polls and Why are They Important?

The typical exit poll questionnaire gathers three types of data: 1) who the research participant voted for in the day’s key elections in a particular jurisdiction (a state or city); 2) a variety of attitudes held by the voter; and 3) the demographic characteristics of the voter. The latter two sets of information can be used to explain why they voted as they did and what kinds of people voted for each candidate. These exit poll questionnaires are relatively short (typically less than 25 questions) and take less than five minutes to complete.

Most people think of election night projections on TV when they think of exit polls. This research, however, is just as important for the information gathered about the voters’ demographics and attitudinal predispositions towards the candidates and the campaign issues as it is for making the projections reported by news organizations on election night.

It is this data that provides powerful explanations, to be examined in election postmortems and by academics and researchers forever after, for why people voted the way they did – telling us which key demographic groups voted for which candidates or which propositions and why.

#### Exit Polling vs. Regular Polling

According to Joseph Lenski of Edison Media Research, who has done exit polling for the National Election Pool, “Exit polls provide accurate data about voter behavior because of the near certainty that persons interviewed have actually voted.” *(continued on page 5)*



(continued from page 4)

Finally, exit polls do something pre-election polls cannot do: capture the voting intent of last-minute deciders. In 2004, 5% of voters made up their minds on whom to vote for on Election Day, according to exit polls. Eleven percent decided whom to vote for in the last week before the election.

Exit pollsters' access to voting places and voters is essential to this kind of research.

Lenski laments that the quality and quantity of exit polling data drops when exit pollsters can't have proper access to the voting place. This is because interviewers are supposed to approach voters in a preset pattern (e.g., every fourth or fifth voter). The further from the voting place the interviewers must stand, the greater the chances of a needed voter disappearing by car without being approached or blending into a crowd that includes people who didn't vote.

He also claims that error rates were many times higher in the 2004 and 2006 elections, when exit pollsters were kept away from some Minnesota voting places.

#### **MRA Helps Turn a Good Legislative Idea into Law**

MRA endorsed H.F. 3108 shortly after Rep. Ryan Winkler (DFL) introduced it (as we did for Senator Sieben's S.F. 2388). We were particularly appreciative that Senator Sieben and Rep. Winkler allowed for all bona fide exit polling in their bills because another effort – H.F. 2566, introduced by Rep. Gene Pelowski (DFL) – would only have allowed exit polling conducted by "a representative of the press." It is important to note that a majority of exit polling is actually conducted by survey and opinion research organizations and companies, not just TV news organizations.

An MRA volunteer later testified at a hearing before the House Committee on State and Local Government Operations Reform, Technology and Elections. On March 4, Gayle Belkengren, President of the MRA Minnesota/Upper Midwest Chapter and a member of the MRA State Capital Network, spoke in defense of exit polling. She answered several questions from the Representatives - not all of them friendly – and represented the entire research profession with great aplomb.

MRA will continue to lobby to protect exit polling in other states. For more information on this or any other legislative/regulatory issues impacting the research profession in the United States, contact the profession's lobbyist at [howard.fienberg@mra-net.org](mailto:howard.fienberg@mra-net.org) or 202-775-5170.

**Howard Fienberg, PLC** is MRA's Director of Government Affairs.

## **Energize Your Market Research Career At the Live MN/Upper Midwest MRA Fall Conference**

September 16, 2010  
Earle Brown Heritage Center  
Brooklyn Center, MN

Become a part of the synergy that ignites when professionals meet in one room. You'll benefit from expert insights at the live sessions that cover today's hottest market research topics and take home tips you can immediately put to use.

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- Project Directors/Managers
- Data Collectors, Field Directors/Managers
- Moderators, Qualitative Research
- Consultants
- Full-Service Research Suppliers
- Research Analysts
- Research Buyers
- Online Marketing Researchers

#### **Planned topics include:**

- Response Rates
- Brand Research
- Charts & Graphs: Computer Tips
- Generational Differences
- Psychology of Wording
- Qualitative Research
- Hiring for Research
- Hope & Humor in the Work Place

*For conference information visit [www.mnmra.org/events](http://www.mnmra.org/events) or email [info@mnmra.org](mailto:info@mnmra.org)*

## “Views from the Top”

**Jim Donoho, Practice Leader, Kenexa**

**An Event Recap**

*May 4, 2010, Majors Sports Café*

*Interviewer: Lori Laflin*

Those of us who have attended “Views from the Top” events recognize Lori Laflin’s unique interview style. While the questions are familiar, the answers never fail to elicit a new “view” of leadership. And since Lori and Jim at one time worked together at NCS, their banter was a fun touch to the event.

The most important lessons, Jim learned in his career had to do with learning his own strengths. He admitted that in early years he tried hard to be all things to all people and to push himself in areas that he later came to learn were not his natural strengths. With self-inquiry, and some interesting career strength profile exercises (at several companies) he gradually came to learn critical differences: for example, he leads very well but not with ego. His preference is to lead a team with input and feedback. He plays to his strengths and adapts to complement others’ strengths, or perhaps fills in where they don’t have a particular strength. He credits this approach with leading to increased job satisfaction and career success.

His second important lesson learned has to do with people he admires. People he mentioned include Steve Jobs and Fred Smith, the founder of Federal Express. In both cases, the lesson he learned has to do with innovation. These are leaders who never gave up, always listened to ideas, and looked to the future. In his example, he noted that Apple surprised us all with the Mac, then the iPod, then the iPhone, and now the iPad. Each time Jobs radically changed the industry and marketplace surrounding those iconic items. Jim noted that in the case of Federal Express, Fred Smith took an old idea to make an amazing multi-million dollar company by doing it differently, better, and completely “out of the box” in his approach.

Jim feels strongly that these are two key components to leadership success for anyone to keep top of mind, whether at the top or at the beginning of their careers: Know yourself and your own strengths, and stay innovative and open and fresh.

Those who attended know that the Q&A session was as long as the formal interview with too many interesting tidbits to catch all of it on paper. So consider attending future *Views from the Top* in October, November, and December 2010, as only those who attend get the benefit of the fascinating Q&A questions, where people get personal direction and insights from industry leaders. Look at the Chapter Website under Calendar Events/Training for more information ([www.mnmra.org](http://www.mnmra.org)).



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# Census Analysis Pierces Stereotype: 48% of Twin Cities Immigrants Hold White-Collar Jobs

*By Sharon Schmickle / MinnPost / April 22, 2010 / Reprinted with Permission*

Take a minute to think about the immigrants working in the Twin Cities. What comes to mind? Janitors? Maybe meat processors? How about taxi drivers?

Thousands of immigrants in our midst do such work.

But this may surprise you: Nearly half of the immigrants working in the Minneapolis – St. Paul metro area hold white-collar jobs — doctor, teacher, engineer and business executive, for example.

And contrary to the stereotype of the needy immigrant, they take home relatively high wages, according to new analysis of census data by the Fiscal Policy Institute in New York.

The full reality of immigration and its economic impact gets lost in fiery rhetoric over issues like border fences and amnesty.

But now, with immigration reform looming as one of the next big challenges facing Congress, the stakes are too high to allow the debate to be hijacked for the sake of hot-button issues alone. That's true even for a northern state like Minnesota.

And high-skilled immigrants may be a key to closing partisan gaps in the debate.

## **A growing, educated and skilled presence**

More than 10 percent of the workers in the Minneapolis – St. Paul area between 2006 and 2008 were foreign born — up from 3 percent in 1990, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute's data. Fifty-seven percent of the immigrants had taken at least some college courses.

While 48 percent had professional and administrative jobs, just 27 percent did blue collar work, and 23 percent held service jobs.

A similar pattern held across 14 of the nation's 25 largest metro areas analyzed by the institute's researchers. A few cities stood out prominently as home to immigrants doing white-collar work. In Pittsburgh, for example, three-fourths of the immigrants worked in professional and administrative jobs while just 11 percent were blue collar workers.

The pattern was different in Dallas, Denver and a few other cities where close to two-thirds of the immigrants did blue-collar or service work. One reason is that booming economies in those cities attract more recently arriving immigrants.

But the nation as a whole — like the Twin Cities — gives a far different picture from what you would expect from political debates in which immigrants often are cast as poor, struggling to hold on at the margins of the workforce.

See Twin Cities Occupation Chart & Read More:

[http://www.minnpost.com/stories/2010/04/22/17547/census\\_analysis\\_pierces\\_stereotype\\_48\\_of\\_twin\\_cities\\_immigrants\\_hold\\_white-color\\_jobs](http://www.minnpost.com/stories/2010/04/22/17547/census_analysis_pierces_stereotype_48_of_twin_cities_immigrants_hold_white-color_jobs)

# What Not to Say at Work

**9 common words and phrases that will make you sound noncommittal, undependable, and untrustworthy**

by Linnda Durré, *Forbes.com*

Some words and phrases are often used to buy time, avoid giving answers, and escape commitment. If you use these words and phrases yourself, take a scalpel and cut them out of your thinking, speaking, and writing.

## “Try”

“Try” is a weasel word. “Well, I’ll try,” some people say. It’s a cop-out. They’re just giving you lip service, when they probably have no real intention of doing what you ask. Remember what Yoda says to Luke Skywalker in “Star Wars”: “Do or do not – there is no *try*.” Take Yoda’s advice. Give it your all when you do something. And if it doesn’t work, start over.

Put passion into your work, and give it your best effort, so you can know that you did all you could to make it happen. So if the outcome you were expecting didn’t come to fruition, it’s not because you didn’t do everything you could to make it happen. It just wasn’t the right time for it or it wasn’t meant to be.

## “Whatever”

This word is a trusted favorite of people who want to dismiss you, diminish what you say, or get rid of you quickly. “Whatever,” they will say as an all-purpose response to your earnest request. It’s an insult and a verbal slap in the face. It’s a way to respond to a person without actually responding. When you say “whatever” after another person has said his or her piece, you have essentially put up a wall between the two of you and halted any progress in communicating. It’s a word to avoid.

## “Maybe” and “I don’t know”

People will sometimes avoid making a decision – and hide behind words and phrases like “maybe” and “I don’t know.” There’s a difference between legitimately not knowing something and using words like these as excuses. Sometimes during a confrontation, people will claim not to know something or offer the noncommittal response “maybe,” just to avoid being put on the spot. If that seems to be the case, ask, “When do you think you will know?” or “How can you find out?” Don’t let the person off the hook so easily.

## “I’ll get back to you”

When people need to buy time or avoid revealing a project’s status, they will say, “I’ll get back to you,” and they usually never do. If people say they will get back to you, always clarify. Ask them when they will get back to you, and make sure they specify the day and time. If they don’t, then pin them down to a day and time and hold them to it. If they won’t give you a day or time, tell them you’ll call in a day or week and follow up. Make sure you call and get the information you need.

## “If”

Projects depend on everyone doing his or her part. People who use “if” are usually playing the blame game and betting against themselves. They like to set conditions, rather than assuming a successful outcome. People who rely on conditional responses are fortifying themselves against potential failure. They will say, “If Bob finishes his part, then I can do my part.” They’re laying the groundwork for a “no fault” excuse and for not finishing their work.

There are always alternatives, other routes, and ways to get the job done. Excuse makers usually have the energy of a slug and the spine of a jellyfish. You don’t want them on your team when you’re trying to climb Mt. Everest.



## 2009 – 2010 FISCAL YEAR-END REPORT TO MEMBERS

### INCOME

Event Income	\$ 8,290.00
Dues	\$ 2,380.00
Interest	\$ 62.31
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$10,732.31</b>

### EXPENSES

Bank/Paypal Fees	\$ 65.81
Board Expenses	\$ 1,348.15
Website Fees	\$ 83.40
Newsletter	\$ 2,146.23
Event Expenses	\$13,005.90
Postage	\$ 1,219.03
Professional Services	\$ 489.60
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$18,358.12</b>

You'll see that we did lose a significant amount this year, impart due to 2008 – 2009 fiscal event payments that were processed during the 2009 – 2010 fiscal year. This amounted to almost \$7500 in expenses additional expenses for the fiscal year. Additionally attendance levels were not at the levels we'd planned, which I would attribute to the current economic trend. Any questions regarding the fiscal year-end report should be directed to our 2009 – 2010 Treasurer, Jeanine Hesse, or Past President Gayle Belkengren (see Board Member page for contact information).

### “Yes, but . . .”

This is another excuse. You might give your team members suggestions or solutions, and they come back to you with “Yes, but . . .” as a response. They don't really want answers, help, or solutions. You need to call the “Yes, but . . .” people out on their avoidance tactic by saying something like “You know, Jackie, every time I offer you a suggestion you say, 'Yes, but . . .,' which makes me think you don't really want to solve this problem. That's not going to work. If you want to play the victim, go right ahead, but I'm not going to allow you to keep this up.” After a response like that, you can be assured that the next words you hear will not be “Yes, but . . .”!

### “I guess . . .”

This is usually said in a weak, soft-spoken, shoulder-shrugging manner. It's another attempt to shirk responsibility – a phrase that is muttered only when people half agree with you but want to leave enough leeway to say, “Well, I didn't really know. . . . I was only guessing.” If you use this phrase, cut it out of your vocabulary.

### “We'll see . . .”

How many times did we hear our parents say this? We knew they were buying time, avoiding a fight or confrontation, or really saying no. It's better to be decisive and honest by saying, “I need more information. Please present your case or send me the data – both pro and con – so I can make an informed decision.” That way, the interested parties will contribute to an in-depth, well-researched “verdict.”

*This column is an excerpt of “[Surviving the Toxic Workplace](#)” (McGraw-Hill, 2010), by Linnda Durré, a psychotherapist, business consultant, and columnist. You can follow her on Twitter: [@LinndaDurreShow](#).*

## Welcoming New Members

The MRA MN/Upper Midwest Chapter is pleased to welcome our new members.

Meighan Frederick	Director, Market Research, Bluestem Brands, Inc.	Eden Prairie, MN
Barry Danielson	Research Solutions VP, MarketTools, Inc.	Minneapolis, MN
Jeffrey Stitt	Director, Market Research and Strategic Planning, MoCo	Minneapolis, MN
Richard Maullin	President, Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates, Inc.	Santa Monica, CA
David Wegge	Director, St. Norbert College Survey Center	DePere, WI
Robert Noha	VP, Public Opinion Polling, The MSR Group	Omaha, NE
Richard R. Worick PRC	President/CEO, The MSR Group	Omaha, NE
Daniel F. Rangel	Sales Manager, CfMC Research Software	Chicago, IL

# Spotlight on...



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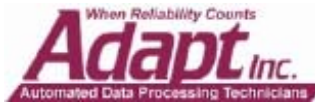
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# The Verbatim

*Robin McDougal  
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