



The Verbatim

Newsletter of the Minnesota/Upper Midwest Chapter of the MRA

Summer 2011

Volume 14 Issue 3

President's Corner

Jeanine Hess, Questar, 2011 – 2012 Chapter President

Where did summer go? That is often the question we all ask ourselves at this time of year. I have no doubt that we have all been busy with work and trying to sneak in that family vacation before the leaves start to fall. But have no fear your Chapter Board has been meeting monthly over the summer to define our goals for the year and putting some of them in motion.

I'd like to highlight a few of those goals and welcome any thoughts you may have.

- Creating a formal welcome process for new members. This will include sending each new member a packet of informational materials. Paul Burnet and his helpful volunteers have been making great strides on this front. I am excited to see the end product.
- Improving chapter member benefits. What benefits would you like to see us offer to our members?
- Educate and engage students on the MRA organization and benefits to them.
- Continue to offer exemplary educational events. Currently we are focusing on a half-day event. We have found there are some hot topics that need more time than the hour-long typical event we host.

The board is really excited for the upcoming months of continued brainstorming and planning. If you ever have any questions, comments or concerns to share with the board don't hesitate to reach out to any of us. We are here to listen and do what we can to help make our Chapter great together.

2011 Upcoming Events

Keep checking the calendar and home page on www.mnmra.org

November 3, 2011

Why do some rebrands fail? Why do others succeed? Brand veteran bares all in eye-opening show-and-tell.

Augsburg Park Library
Richfield, MN

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“Views from the Top”

Mary Jo Malecha, VP Research, Harris Interactive

An Event Recap

Majors Sports Café

Interviewer: Lori Laflin

This session of “Views from the Top” was conducted with Mary Jo Malecha, Vice President of Research for Harris Interactive’s Business and Industrial Division, and interviewed by Lori Laflin, “Views from the Top’s” creator.

Mary Jo shared that every day is a bit different...there are always financials for the division –revenue tracking and projections...there is time to help manage the teams (the division has 6) and encourage and coach her fabulous team leaders. She also meets with clients, talks with clients, and writes and prices proposals. Of course it wouldn’t be an average day without some time to read and add to reports with a bit of time left over to troubleshoot projects (you name it!) and she tries to leave some time to plan and help set strategy for the division.

Her favorite two things are:

- A. Meet with clients, design research to answer their business questions.
- B. Coach my team leaders. Help them problem solve and develop into great managers and researchers.

Her point B raised some questions so she shared more:

“I formed my leadership style in the late 80’s early 90’s in grad school. I was a young research director and I had a couple of classes at St. Mary’s that really resonated with me. One was my Team Management class – where we learned that teams go through 4 distinct phases – Forming, Storming, Norming and Performing. You have to have patience with teams and let them work through the stages. A team can whip through the stages or it can take years. Some teams never make it through Storming and so disband.”

“The other was my Organizational Leadership class where we read the book Situational Leadership. Ken Blanchard was one of the authors. It explained that it is the LEADERS who must change and adapt to the situation, not the employee...that all employees need different types of leadership at different times in different situations, that adjusting your style to the needs of the employees is actually more equitable, not less.”

“When I read that book and we discussed it in class I realized that I worked with a lot of different people with different styles, talents, personalities, and who were at different stages in their careers. AND, that was the most homogeneous group I ever managed!”

Lori Laflin, the “Views from The Top” Moderator noted...”Your division seems to be built around team work. How do you go about building and sustaining a high functioning team? How is leading in that type of environment different from a traditional hierarchy?”

Mary Jo’s immediate response was RESPECT! She indicated one must respect the differences...enjoy the differences. Everyone has something to contribute, something to teach us. She demands respect and getting along. With a small office, and small teams – it just requires getting along. Everyone is on the team for a reason, and that alone makes everyone worthy of each other’s respect. It is not required that all agree, however. She likes a lot of diverse opinions.

She also shared that she tries to lead by example. Her team sees that she respects everyone on the team and they should too. She expects people to do their job, but everyone comes running if someone raises the white flag!

Teams are based on collaboration. Everyone buys in. There is less fear and more a feel of being all in it together. The leader is also a co-worker, in the trenches with the team. She's believed in this way of leadership for over 20 years. It's worked very well. She also thinks teamwork is especially well suited to marketing research.

She shared that she has a very virtual team – people in Mpls, NYC, Rochester NY, Princeton, Washington DC, Norwalk, CT., Atlanta, Detroit, California, Texas, and Florida. Communication is very important. There are weekly ALL TEAM calls, sales calls (weekly or every other week), weekly Team Leader calls, and each of the Team Leaders have weekly meetings with their teams. Not all are very long, the point is to touch base and check in. To assist, they are heavy users of SharePoint tools: Calendars, schedules, shared documents.

One of Lori's classic "Views" question is about who is most influential and admired. Mary Jo has 3 leaders she admires most: her father, Doug Berdie (who was her mentor at Anderson & Berdie and Carlson Research Company), and, she admits almost cliché, but Abraham Lincoln.

Mary Jo shared a story about her father, owner of the local department store where she grew up. She remembers Saturday morning all employee meetings and her father talking about customer service. "The Customer is why we are here, why we have jobs." If someone had a tough encounter or situation with a customer that week it would be discussed or demonstrated in some role playing.

She recalls that he was innovative. He had a Teen Board made up of teenagers who were interested in retail. They worked like medical interns doing rotations in the store in various departments, helped the buyers, helped in the stock room, helped with displays, and did some modeling in our fashion shows.

He also set a good example in treating female employees well. Retail was full of working women, and women had management positions in his store. Even in the 60's and 70's.

He had high expectations of his employees. His employees loved him. After he closed the store – bad economy in the late 80's and he was nearing retirement age, they held reunion lunches and always invited him (and sometimes MaryJo!).

Her memories of Doug were equally fascinating. She gave the room a laugh as she admitted he pushed her out of the nest without her knowing it! He'd very casually have her take over a meeting or a call, or write a report that she wasn't sure she could, but he'd be so nonchalant about it that she'd just do it – and not realize until later that he was using that as a teaching moment.

He taught her to be positive – that you can change the situation and/or others opinions to be positive. Never only give your boss bad news (being afraid to bother him or her with simple things or good news). Make it a habit to also give your boss good news—he or she could probably really use it ... and will appreciate it.

The other thing Doug taught was the idea that marketing research clients are purchasing COMFORT. Clients want to know that we know what we are doing, that we will conduct their research well, on time, and deliver the answers to their questions. They don't want us to be nervous, or reactionary. We are the experts and that is why we were hired. Act like it!

(continued on page 4)

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In regards to her appreciation of Abraham Lincoln – she liked that he surrounded himself with people who had different opinions and different beliefs and levels of experience. It's good to make sure you continue to listen to other opinions and not get caught up in GroupThink which can be easy to do.

Mary Jo then answered questions about any ethical dilemmas she has faced. She opined that co-workers and clients respect the truth. It's a very Midwestern values kind of thing, that attitude. She once had a client tell one of his co-workers that she was one of the most truthful, straight-shooters he'd ever encountered in a supplier...that is, if she called with a problem or a "situation" he'd shut his door and listen attentively to what she had to say.

Sometimes ethical dilemmas are REALLY our client's, she advised. We need to help them, talk them through it. Find an ethical solution. You can set up your company and your systems so that you cannot break CASRO rules for example, so that you cannot do SUGGING, so that you cannot reveal the identities of your respondents, even if you have a panel.

When asked about a specific problem she faced, Mary Jo remembered a huge job for a very demanding client...the biggest job the entire office had ever had. It was international. It was entirely phone data collection and there were 10 different data collection centers working on it. They had almost the entire office working on it, and, gulp, the job represented almost all the company revenue. How do you manage such a beast?

With a great TEAM – all with specific roles and responsibilities, but with people who were flexible enough to change what they were concentrating on every day due to the changing nature of the project and the decisions on the client side.

They had a meeting EVERY morning at 9am and discussed what needed to be done that day. She remembers they would troubleshoot through the daily tasks...when the estimates came back the first time they were almost always too long (say, 9 or 10 hours). The answer - Nope, we only have 7 hours, now how can we do it? People would throw out ideas and YES – go do that! There was a noon meeting every day with the clients. They got into a rhythm...then change the system or process a bit as they moved through the project phases.

They did a great job, delivered great reports on time; everyone worked a kazillion hours (evenings, weekends) for months. They got pretty big bonuses that year; the client was thrilled, and came back with repeat business for many years.

When asked what the greatest challenges facing our market research industry today are she shared

- Reduced client budgets for research...and advised all to have patience. She thinks the budgets will come back.
- Reduced client staff – we are becoming extensions of their research departments. The solution here is to accept it, and be it, and become indispensable.
- Demand for Speed – sometimes at the cost of quality (in her opinion). No one seems to have time to think anymore. To meet this challenge is difficult. One "solution" would be to try to find more time to think, but it isn't always possible. She would say that you then have to set different expectations. Do as high a quality job as you can. Make sure to include caveats in your report about the constraints under which the research was conducted.
- DIY – Zoomerang, Survey Monkey – she suggests you've just got to let them try. Many will come back. But, for some kinds of research, it may be okay.

What she is most excited about for the future for our industry includes:

- Changing data collection platforms and reporting platforms – so much online, so much more powerful than static reports and surveys.
- Online focus groups and bulletin boards. Easier to participate for the respondents, the moderators, and the clients!
- Social media monitoring and Lifestreaming
- SharePoint Collaboration and communication for internal teams and between internal teams and client teams.

But, she also shared that it's not REALLY the technology that excites her, it's that clients seem to really want to LISTEN to their customers again. She thinks that these new techniques help to bring companies back to Customer Loyalty and customer service – it has come full circle.

Mary Jo's advice to future leaders?

- Be curious!
- Read reports and proposals and questionnaires.
- Participate – ask to sit in on client meetings and calls.
- Observe how senior researchers and managers interact with clients.
- Observe their styles – what will be your style?
- Pick a mentor – invaluable! Write down your observations and questions and ask your mentor (or manager) later.
- Take all the training your company offers.
- Learn all the phases of marketing research – all the modes of data collection, all the methodologies, and analyses.
- Don't specialize too soon.
- Go to grad school if you can. Shop for the program that fits, that feels right.
- Write, write, write
- And lastly, have a sense of humor...It's not life or death, it's only marketing research.

Do I really need to pay attention to Google+?

Blog article by Merrill Dubrow, CEO M/A/R/C® Research and Eric Swayne, Director, Social Analytics and Insights for M/A/R/C® Research

I must admit I am on Google every day and sometimes every hour. Well Google has a new feature that is called Google+. Since I am not an expert on this and I know someone who knows 10 times more than I do about the social space and world I thought it would be a great time to tap into the brilliant, creative and big brain of Eric Swayne.

With that said, here are a few burning questions I had for Eric...

It's been reported that Google+ has over 25 million users – is that significant compared to Facebook's 750 million?

Of course Facebook has the larger total audience right now, but there are a few reasons why Google+'s numbers are captivating:

- Google+ is far and away the fastest growing social network *ever*, and could even be the fastest growing *website* in history: <http://www.businessinsider.com/google-plus-growth-25-million-users-2011-8>
- G+ is still in a beta testing phase – meaning Google is throttling the number of invites handed out and limiting new signups. Meaning, this network isn't yet growing at the rate it could be



- Right now, G+ is attracting almost all of the most socially active users on the web – practically everyone any measure would label as an “influencer” is on there. Now is a great time to learn this platform and interact with these voices.

What’s the coolest feature of G+?

I’d say it’s a tie. First, G+ is based around Circles, which are groups of friends you create. If you include me in your “Friends” Circle and then post content on G+ just for “Friends”, I’ll get to see it but others that aren’t in that circle won’t. Moreover, you can include me in a Circle without me doing the same – we can follow each other’s’ content at different levels. It’s this understanding of the varying levels of friendship we all have that makes G+ really powerful.

Hangouts is another feature just as fascinating – this enables real-time video chat between up to 10 G+ users at once. This feature brings some high-end telepresence features to the masses and all for free through a very light-weight browser plug-in. Facebook has video chat as well, but right now it’s only one-to-one – so there’s no way to invite others to join you. With G+ you can announce to any of your Circles that you’re in a Hangout, and they can come join at any time.

Is G+ the next Facebook?

G+ has a lot of similarities to both Facebook and Twitter, but I don’t think you’ll see it completely supplant either of those. I’ve heard many stories from other G+ users that they’ve started spending *less* time on Facebook or Twitter, but they still see the utility of each. G+ also offers brands some very different opportunities from Facebook with Circles and Hangouts – tools that will enable brands to become really effective Community Managers and interact with consumers at a very personal level. I think you’ll see brand campaigns span multiple platforms, and smart social marketers will take advantage of the best capabilities within each.

I thought I heard that brands weren’t yet allowed on G+ – is that true?

As of this moment, G+ users must be actual people using their actual names – brands are not supposed to use G+ from a personal profile. This hasn’t prevented some brands from doing it, and Google has left some of these profile/brand hybrids up as “test cases”, such as Breaking News (<https://plus.google.com/109610954243983229925/posts>), Mashable (<https://plus.google.com/101849747879612982297/posts>), and Ford Motor Company (<https://plus.google.com/114277687548103339609/posts>). Google has said they are working feverishly on a “Brand Page” type of profile, and will release that soon. In the meantime, Google has actually received some flack for deactivating accounts that appeared to be using pseudonyms or brand names.

How will you use G+ in Marketing Research? What are the implications of this platform for Researchers?

As with every new social network, G+ offers us new ways to connect with consumers and find out what marketing actions will best influence their behavior. G+ will allow us to have very intimate and insightful conversations by letting us limit sample groups through Circles, and interact with them through real-time tools like Hangouts. I can easily see G+ being a great tool for interacting with a Consumer Advisory Panel on a regular, long-term basis. G+ is also going to let us see new ethnographic behaviors – since users are coming to the network with a “clean slate,” we can see how users are conducting social actions now that they’ve had some training from Facebook, Twitter, and even MySpace. For example, photographers have quickly gravitated to G+ over Flickr, because it provides them new (and *free*) ways to share their art, where Flickr wasn’t innovating.

I think anyone in the Research field should grab an invite (click here to get one while supplies last:

https://plus.google.com/_/notifications/ngemlink?path=%2F%3Fqpinv%3DY916-Gq043E%3A7CIErYxx3ro) and start using this network – and not just because I’m “the social media guy.” What we have here is a brand new social platform that has a genuine chance of taking off and becoming every bit as relevant as Facebook. Learning the lessons of what works here before it gets huge is an invaluable education, and the kind you can only learn for yourself.

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Study reviews income, gender

By Abi Hoverman

Reprinted with permission from *The Observer* – The independent newspaper serving Notre Dame and St. Mary's

Nice guys - and mean girls - can actually come last in the business world, according to research from management professor Timothy Judge published earlier this month. Judge's paper, which studies the effects of personality and gender on income, addressed the career advantages and disadvantages of an argumentative workplace attitude. "How we expect a woman to behave may seem primitive ... but [stereotypes] still exist for a substantial part of the population," Judge said.

Judge investigated the issue when he saw assertive and successful women like Martha Stewart receive excessive criticism while the media championed male figures like Donald Trump as "tough negotiators." "It made me wonder if being a tough business woman cast [Stewart] in a different light," he said. He also cited Hilary Clinton's 2008 presidential campaign as an example of negative attention directed at women with strong personalities.

After collecting his research, Judge found a connection between aggressive workplace behavior and higher pay. "Disagreeable people get more resources because they ask for more," he said. This trend results from the fact that more assertive people are more likely to ask for pay raises and job promotions, Judge said.

However, Judge said he saw a severe gender gap emerge in his research as well. While men reaped the benefits of their confrontational behavior, he said women rarely received higher pay as a result of the same actions. "If you're a woman, you have to be careful about how you ask and not cross the line and be called the 'B-word,'" Judge said. Men benefit from being disagreeable because males are generally expected to be more harsh and aggressive, Judge said.

The female stereotype, however, is a kind, cooperative, gentle and sympathetic character. Judge said challenging this stereotype leads to harsh criticism rather than praise.

"We can't think that just because we have progressed, our instincts [about gender roles] have gone away," Judge said.

As women assume leadership roles more regularly, Judge said this negative reception of aggressive women might evolve. However, Judge said businesses would need to develop programs now to encourage open and honest dialogue to address this double standard.

While women should be careful of the biases working against them, Judge said they should not be discouraged.

"You don't always get what you ask for, but you rarely get what you don't ask for," he said.

"Avoiding conflict at all costs has consequences."

2010-2011 Year-End Report to Members

Income

Event Income	12,789.00
Dues Income	2,380.00
Interest	17.34
Total Income	15,186.34

Expenses

Bank/Paypal fees	73.02
Board expenses	356.79
Newsletter expenses	2,556.08
Event expenses	12,201.80
Professional services	733.34
Total Expenses	13,900.23

Net Income 1,286.11

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Understanding Minnesota's Baby Boomers: A Research Case Study – Event Recap

By Zachary Feinstein

On April 14, 2011 Peter Spruit and Lori Laflin presented a case study entitled "Understanding Minnesota's Baby Boomers". The discussion focused on the "boomer generation" and how their shifting demographics are affecting Minnesota for the long term.

Some very poignant visuals were presented to the group over the catered lunch. Most particularly it is obvious that services and needs for the boomer generation will need to be addressed in the next 10 - 20 years.

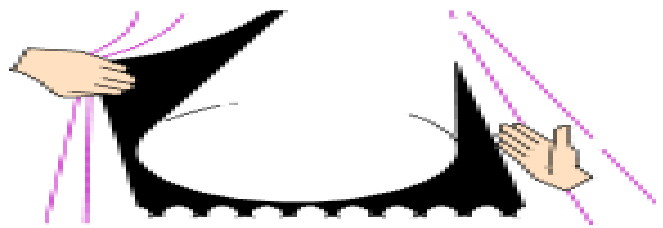
Housing was a particularly salient topic. And there was much discussion about the kinds of options that will and should be available to boomers. More nursing homes are not the answer. Providing housing where they can maintain the quality of their lives while mixed in with other demographics and age cohorts from the general MN population seemed optimal.

The biggest surprise in the entire discussion was the response rate that the state of MN obtained for the survey. This was 38%! This was a result of two factors. One, the party that provided the sample very efficiently put everything together. The second factor is that people obviously liked answering questions about themselves in a way that boosted the participation. There was no incentive to do the survey given state regulations.

The Speakers: Peter Spruit provides leadership for Minnesota Bureau on Aging's work on senior nutrition and health promotions programs and initiatives to make Minnesota communities more livable for the aging population and improve support for family caregivers. Earlier he worked on Transform 2010, a project of both agencies to work across sectors to transform policies, infrastructures and services so that Minnesota can thrive during the coming age wave. Through Transform 2010 he pursued policy strategies related to family caregiving, older adult income security, and aging in place in community. Prior to working for DHS and MBA, Peter's work cut across many core elements of the aging services network, including: senior nutrition, refugee and immigrant services, information and assistance, and senior housing. Peter holds a Masters in Social Work for the University of Minnesota.

Lori serves as the subject matter expert for survey methods and analysis at the Department of Human Services, the largest state agency (approximately 6700 employees and an annual budget of approximately \$11 billion). She promotes the effective use of survey research throughout the department by serving as an internal consultant and is responsible for the development and maintenance of survey policies and procedures. Prior to state service, Lori spent nearly 20 years in private sector market research, at GfK Custom Research, CJ Olson and NCS. *[Note: Since this article was written, Lori has moved to Cargill.]*

Spotlight on...



Lots of advisors
suit up, show up
and keep up.
But how many
know when
to speak up?



Team McGladrey Golfer Zach Johnson and his caddy, Damon Green.

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UPCOMING FALL EVENT:

November 3, 2011 Augsburg Park Library - 7100 Nicollet Ave., Richfield, MN 55423

Why do some rebrands fail? Why do others succeed?

Brand veteran bares all
in an eye-opening show-and-tell.

Branding specialist and Fast Company expert blogger David Brier is the author of "Defying Gravity & Rising Above the Noise" — a book that can boast that both Steve Jobs and Donald Trump each have their own copies.

Working with a wide base of clients nationwide, David brings a very practical and unconventional approach to branding. Being a native New Yorker, David is passionate about wanting to know:

- What did the rebranding do in the marketplace?
- What perceptions did it change?
- Did it disrupt the status quo to give his client an unfair advantage?

David's presentations are highly visual showing not only what he created to help brands with new products or rebrands but, more critically, WHY it was done and what happened AFTER the launch or rebrand? Did sales increase? Did customer loyalty increase? And when it did, he examines WHY.

In this presentation, David will show various case studies and unearth why they worked. And why other brands failed.

Takeaways for attendees:

- The one thing that is killing any brand that's suffering today
- What to do when your brand's been pigeon-holed and how to overcome this brand killer
- An inside case study of one rebrand that increased sales 300% in 30 days after the launch
- How an online startup that saw sales increase 397% in 4 years after their rebrand and what exact steps made it work
- Help you understand your client's brand concerns

David Brier is the recipient of over 320 industry awards and is the Creative Director of DBD International. Under his direction, clients across the US and internationally have seen the power of design and its ability to help their products, events and services rise above the noise. In addition to writing widely published [articles](#), David has authored of a number of books. David's latest book is entitled [Defying Gravity and Rising Above the Noise](#) covering the 8 principles to achieving brand elevation. David Brier is also a [Fast Company expert blogger](#). You can subscribe to his posts at <http://www.fastcompany.com/member-news-feed/164967>





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