

INSIDE RESEARCH®

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"The Bible of the Market Research Industry" – Barron's

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IIR'S MR EVENT DELIVERS ONCE AGAIN

Rebounding with 27% attendance increase to 902 record, and program with something for everyone, **IIR's 8th Annual MR Event** matched recovery experienced by other MR conferences this year. Held at new, cavernous Hilton Bayfront hotel in San Diego, CA, over Nov. 8-10, event offered previous year's subject matter of MR tools, analytics, techniques, applications, studies/case histories, best practices, and management/leadership advice/inspiration. Program offered nine keynoters (six authors) that bookended each day, and helped relieve intense MR focus.

Event delivered even more buyers at 58% this year, consistently over twice that of other U.S. MR conferences, together with program format that justified attendee fee 50%-100% higher than typical. Well-established but slimmer format nevertheless offered 108 talk sessions from 127 speakers, including 73 from buyer side, many of them vps/directors that served to drive high peer attendee count. Buyer attendees mostly junior/mid-level researchers to gain ideas/experiences from peer speakers. Sellers, either attending or exhibiting, had field day, with buyers good-naturedly going along.

85 exhibitors (11 more than last year) filled tight space next to ballroom in four rows making aisle navigation challenging during breaks and cocktail receptions, despite three cross-overs. Over half full-service providers (rare at most conferences) again with global presence of **TNS** and **GfK**, balance mainly online panel, field services and software providers. Exhibitors saw good traffic, but some complained about higher space prices. 54 sponsors (mostly exhibitors) got signage throughout, with some also paying for event activities in sponsorship packages. Stylish lunches served in large tent outside on hotel grounds.

Event-sponsored bloggers and twitterers provided timely feedback, and much effort by IIR put into insuring on-site value for attendees. Nearly all took advantage of new wireless platform to connect and network with each other via electronic fob on badges. As typical, buyer talk content mostly sanitized and seller talks selling kept at minimum by prior IIR review. Highlights:

- **Keynotes of Note:** Audience enthralled by tour de force, hour-long talk on past/present/future of digital world by **Wired Magazine's** editor, Chris Anderson (and author, 'The Long Tail') now driven by confluence of hardware and open web moving toward cloud platform, but balkanized by rise of apps, subscriptions and freemiums (free + pay premium stuff). Web's open commercial side to continue. Driving this: rise of tablet hardware/format as third computing platform to replace PC with its big reading time (100 minutes for iPad, vs. 60 minutes for print vs. 2-3 minutes for web) . . . "Pure reason is a disease," intoned science writer Jonah Lehrer, 'How We Decide,' with decisions driven by emotion in making choices, but sensitive to experience. He said loss aversion exerts more influence than gratification and provided insightful stories to illustrate, never once mentioning neuroscience. More to point: "Brands are expectations that are engineered for our pleasure." Book sold out at book signing.

- **More of Interest:** Tour of **Microsoft Corp.'s** corporate MR organization by its head Reed Cundiff enthralled standing-room-only listeners, who described its in-house professional training that includes communication and research consultation skills, eschewing **McKinsey** types. He expressed chagrin at out-of-control DIY online survey use among organization's tech-types and now try to take control in name of data quality, a work in process . . . After its budget-strapped marketers burned by use of DIY SurveyMonkey, **3M Co.'s** Sandra Kelly created internal MR group (six recent grads contract analysts plus one manager) using **Vision Critical/Sawtooth/SPSS** software to wrest control at low cost: for '09, \$426,000 revenue from marketing for 156 projects, saving \$1.7 million over outsourcing, with average price of \$900/\$1,200 for simple surveys and \$2,000/\$3,000 for more complex. Later, Kristen Luck, **Decipher**, noted, 100% of **Fortune 100** companies use SurveyMonkey or similar software.

Non-conscious response by **Campbell Soup Co.'s** Bob Woodard used in choosing between two ad campaigns, where traditional measures didn't explain differences. With use of **Innerscope** and **Zmet** biometrics and eyetracking, campaigns revealed intersection of cognition and emotion, with choice validated by sales response and marketing mix analysis. Merchandising example using same methods revealed display faults . . . Address-based sample with phone/cell costs similar to landline-only methods? Yes, said **REI's** Anne-Marie Davidson who noted hidden additional costs for latter make them comparable. Listeners later scoffed at idea.

12th Annual EXPLOR Award for innovative technology applications in MR won by **American Water** with **Digital Research Inc.** and **ThinkVine**. Award for moving to fact-based Target Identification Program tool for evaluating and segmenting municipalities for their water system sales potential incorporating range of financial, census and environment data. TIP tool used structural equation modeling and neural networks to score municipalities for opportunities via custom dashboard, incorporating Google Earth mapping and Excel software. Effort changed sales culture from field relationships to fact-based target identification.

Next year: Disney's Contemporary Resort, Orlando, FL, Oct. 17-19.

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