

MSRA NEWSLETTER

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“MR Apprentices” – Here They Come!

By Richard Wanjohi

Take a look at these numbers and note them down somewhere; 61 years, 7 billion and 52%. We'll review them at some point later. Any business worth its salt in the current world knows that research has become very integral to the success and survival of their entity. From big multi-nationals to SMEs and even the start-ups that are creating a buzz in the technology and various sectors of the economy. Baseline studies, customer surveys, polling to longitudinal studies and more recently 'big data' all these are just but part of the offering from your typical marketing research organisation.

Even what would be referred to as past-times such as sports (*a proclivity for this writer*) which were previously not such huge consumers of research, this has become very vital. The statistics and numbers displayed here not only make for interesting viewing by the TV and sports commentators; it also offers the sports consumers the thrills and enrichment while enjoying their favourite game, sport or event.

For those who love basketball or cricket, you know how important the numbers are in such sports – number of

baskets made, missed shots, steals, wickets taken, innings, runs are just parts of the stats. Data and numbers in sport also provide writers and columnists important information to be able to piece together an insightful story. It also gives a perspective that offers any reader, listener and audience for the sports information.



Back to the business side of things, without research many a firms and organisations would be groping in the dark without a footing. A day cannot go by without one organisation or the other issuing a report on a study done or numbers from a given period reported. This is part of the evolving world that is marketing research.

With the world has been undergoing

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monumental changes in the way to conduct business, so too have countries and governments elected or governing those countries. The African and Kenyan economies have also seen a need to change how they do business and provide basic services to their citizenry. Remember the figures at the beginning? 61 years represent the average life expectancy in Kenya in 2012 (*the latest figures from the World Bank*).

For Kenya in particular, there is the constitutional dividend in the form of devolved governance which recently marked their first anniversary since coming into place in 2013. This has seen the need to understand what happens at a very local level, how this would affect both the county and national governments, in utilisations of resources, disbursement and apportioning funds for development. Being the pioneers this means collection, analysis and eventual consumption and storage of such data by these regions as well as at national level.

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Break Time

See if you can figure out the real phrase in market research. The first answer is provided as an example:

1. Incentives that are in form of objects that are of general value and can be traded (e.g. cash)!
Answer: Extrinsic rewards!
2. Process of finding information by looking through material that already exists.
3. Statistical technique used with quantitative data to identify groups within a data set.
4. One event being caused by another, in a way that a light turning on is caused by flicking the switch.
5. Process of turning open ended responses into quantitative data making it suitable for quantitative processes.
6. Annual study conducted by ESOMAR which reports on key industry statistics e.g. market size.
7. Process of using elements of gaming to improve respondent engagement with the survey process.
8. Survey conducted to test some aspect of the design of a project e.g. its length or comprehensibility.

Answers on pg 2

Such has informed the need for establishments such as higher institutions of learning to develop programmes that will take care of data collection and analysis. Among the first to do so has been University of Nairobi which developed the Master of Science- Marketing degree for post-graduate students. This program has the Marketing Research option which is being run in partnership with GfK Verein which seeks to enrich the way marketing research has been done in Kenya and Africa at large. The program also has options offering insights into Branding, Retail and Sales Management as well as Global Marketing.

The programme is a ground-breaking step in many ways as it is among the first of its kind in Africa, well ahead of bigger economies such as Nigeria and South Africa as well as our North African brothers. As of writing this article, the initial class of this programme is about to be released from the rigours of their studies and start engaging with the market and business world. The mix of both theoretical and practical skills in marketing research will indeed be put to the test for these individuals.

It is important that these individuals understand the level of expectations from the institution, the partnering organisation as well as those who have been in the marketing research field. Their path is clearly marked out and shall offer a glimpse of what this field is to expect in the coming years.

And for those who expect to remain relevant in a rapidly changing world, it is imperative that one is able to compete not just at a local and national level, but globally against the best practices in the field of marketing research. Remember the second figure that I mentioned earlier? 7 billion people: that is the estimated number of people living on the Planet Earth as of 2011 and is competing for the same resources, opportunities and to make a difference like anyone else (*these figures are from www.worldometers.com*)

Indeed, that this is a significant milestone for the marketing industry in the country cannot be over-emphasised. The marketing department in most organisations has borne the flak for when performance metrics are put forth and also when the economic times are hard.

Marketers have been wholesomely accused of not knowing or understanding the numbers and basically the bottom-line of what their businesses are all about.

The final number that I had mentioned 52% represents the number of marketers who have found a customer on Facebook.

One may ask what relevance these numbers have. Well, those are the insights that marketing researchers will bring to your business when you engage them. It's not just the numbers that matter (*no jibing at the accountants and statisticians*), rather making sense and interpreting those numbers to uncover trends, ways of doing more efficiently and ultimately making a better world all around us!

By Richard Wanjohi, marketing consultant and part of pioneering class for MSc (Marketing) at the University of Nairobi.

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Break Time

Answers from page 1.

2. Desk Research
3. Cluster Analysis
4. Causation
5. Coding
6. ESOMAR Global Market Research Report
7. Gamification
8. Pilot Project

MSRA 2014 Convention

Technology in Research: - "The good, the Bad & the Opportunity"

MSRA invites you to its 2014 Convention scheduled for the **26th of June 2014.**

The conference themed **"Technology in Research – the good, the bad and the opportunities"**, will explore critical issues on the use of and future of technology in research.

This premier event brings together key stakeholders from the Government, media fraternity, academia, consumers of research (from private and public sectors) among others to share experiences, perspectives, insights and the latest developments in Market and Social Research.

This year's conference features a special effort dedicated to the exchange between Kenya's market research professionals and their clients. This will feature experiences from various clients on the role of market research in their organizations, including the success cases as well as their disappointments and expectations.

The Keynote speaker will be **Mr. Joseph Mucheru, Google Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) ambassador as well as Country Manager Kenya.**

N.B - Charges and venue will be confirmed soon.