

## CASE STUDY

*identifying opportunity through custom research*

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### **Advertising Research**

#### ***The Issue:***

An advertising campaign targeting Hispanics was developed for an insurance provider by its advertising agency. The company and its agency wanted to measure awareness levels for this new Hispanic campaign among this segment prior to and after the campaign.

#### ***The Solution:***

MRSI developed a telephone survey to be conducted in high density Hispanic markets one week before the campaign rolled out and another survey to be conducted after the campaign. Research was designed to address level of unaided and aided brand awareness, as well as insurance behavior among Hispanics.

#### ***Business Implication:***

The research found that the Hispanic market was aware of the company, yet the advertising campaign had not increased that awareness significantly, and there was also confusion among this group regarding brand offerings. Stronger brand association needed to be developed for the company and its commercial executions directed towards Hispanics. In addition, specific offerings appropriate for various income groups in this segment needed to be clarified.

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### **Restaurant A&U Study**

#### ***The Issue:***

A national fast food chain was facing declining sales and did not have a clear image with consumers.

#### ***The Solution:***

In response, the chain developed a new strategy involving a streamlined menu, a new line of high quality burgers, and a provocative ad campaign for a regional test. MRSI designed a phone-based tracking study, with a pre-wave before the launch and three post-waves after the introduction of the new burger line. Results clearly showed that the new burger line and ad campaign were a major success in the regional test.

#### ***Business Implication:***

The new product launch increased awareness of the chain and its advertising, generated more traffic and trial, and changed some existing negative perceptions. The fast food chain was perceived as more honest, confident, and energetic due to the new ads. Based on this compelling consumer response, the new burger line and ad campaign was expanded nationally and has generated strong sales.

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### **Claim Substantiation**

#### ***The Issue:***

An apparel manufacturer wanted to make a claim that its product was preferred over its two main competitors.

#### ***The Solution:***

In order to make the claim, the respondents had to try on the products to compare. MRSI designed the research in such a way that the respondents would have no way of knowing the brand of the products they were trying on. This was a difficult task as the products all had well-known logos on them making them easily identifiable. MRSI's creative solution was to blindfold the respondents, ask them to try on the client's product, along with one of the competitor's, and state which they prefer. Research was conducted via mall intercepts across the country among adult men 18 and older.

#### ***Business Implication:***

Respondents preferred the client's product to the competition 2 to 1. Thus, the apparel manufacturer was able to make that claim in its national ad campaign in an effort to increase sales.

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### **Custom Online Research Panels**

#### ***The Issue:***

A client offers software services for human resource professionals. Customer needs are changing at a rapid pace. This results in a need to research issues as they arise, but the cost of reaching this group is too expensive to continually initiate new research studies.

Our client needs timely answers to issues as they surface in the marketplace. In addition, R&D is developing new enhancements to the software solutions. To focus the development effort on the right customer need, a mechanism for customer feedback is needed. The system has to have immediate availability (to address the idea when it is born) and fast feedback (to decide whether or not to pursue development). And the system has to be affordable!

#### ***The Solution:***

A custom Internet panel of human resource professionals was recruited. This provided a ready source of qualified respondents with the ability to reach them fast. As our client identified issues, we could have actionable data for them in less than a week. Using our iResearch<sup>®</sup> technology kept the study costs affordable.

#### ***Business Implications:***

Our client was able to answer questions that in the past were cost prohibitive. Decisions can now be made with customer input, instead of marketer's intuition. The panel is almost like having a group of customers just down the hall to talk to. Imagine management raising an issue today, and being able to provide a cost-effective answer by the time they meet again next week!

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### **Customer Satisfaction**

#### ***The Issue:***

A major utility provider wanted to gauge customer satisfaction levels among consumers and small to medium-sized businesses regarding its response to power failures during a particularly active storm season. The objective was to determine customer satisfaction with the company's response given the level of devastation by each storm.

#### ***The Solution:***

Quick timing was essential, both for implementation and research results. Using sample by county provided by the client, MRSI developed phone surveys that could be implemented right after every storm. Questions focused on how long power was off, ease of communication with the utility, and satisfaction with how long it took to get the power back on.

#### ***Business Implication:***

The client received results within days after each storm. Research determined that a major satisfaction point was visibility. Customers wanted to see trucks working to repair outages immediately after storms. Findings such as these enabled the utility provider to determine improvement areas and how best to communicate with their customers to maintain high satisfaction levels.

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### **Customer Satisfaction**

#### ***The Issue:***

An outbreak of contaminated pet food products created low levels of consumer confidence in pet foods and associated pet food retailers. A national pet food retailer was interested in conducting customer satisfaction research surrounding the incident. The retailer was specifically interested in assessing customer satisfaction with the company's response to the outbreak and understanding whether they were gaining or losing customers due to the incident.

#### ***The Solution:***

MRSI was asked to conduct a telephone survey among pet owners about the contaminated pet food outbreak. The survey focused on awareness of the incident, whether the consumer was affected, and any impact the incident had on shopping behavior. A representative mix of current and competitive customers was included in order to fully understand the issue.

#### ***Business Implications:***

Research indicated that nearly all pet owners were aware of the incident, but very few personally experienced issues with contaminated products. While the incident had direct impact on few in the pet community, shoppers as a whole were concerned with the issue at hand. The pet food and supply company was able to leverage this information to build confidence among their consumers and position themselves as a high quality pet food supplier with the best interest of pets as a key messaging platform.

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### Customer Satisfaction

#### *The Issue:*

A national retailer initiated a strategy of including in-store kiosks in several of their stores that offer healthy drinks and refreshments. The goal of this strategy is to enhance the customer experience, add a lifestyle point of differentiation, and generate incremental sales.

However, patronage at some in-store kiosks started to decline and sales were inconsistent across stores. This client requested research that would help them understand customer satisfaction levels for the in-store kiosks as well as better understand shopper purchase behavior at the kiosks.

#### *The Solution:*

Kiosk customers were recruited in-store to participate in this study. Invitations provided a website address and a single-use password for accessing an online survey hosted on MRSI's online interviewing platform.

Survey quotas were established by sales tier to secure sample representation for three different levels of in-store kiosk sales performance.

#### *Business Implications:*

The research found that satisfaction levels were quite high for the in-store kiosks, regardless of kiosk sales performance. Therefore, factors other than operational effectiveness were driving lower kiosk sales and the sales differences across stores.

The study further enabled this retailer to better understand "destination" visits to the in-store kiosks as compared to kiosk patronage as part of a shopper's typical store shopping behavior.

A higher percentage of destination visits was identified as a quality of better performing kiosks. Store location, trade area demographics, and convenience were drivers of these destination visits as well as key contributors to overall kiosk success.

This research provided insight into customer satisfaction as it related to in-store kiosk performance. It also pointed to non-operational drivers of sales performance as areas of client marketing focus to generate more destination-type visits and patronage.

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### **Direct Mail Evaluation**

#### ***The Issue:***

The Financial Department of an insurance and financial services company sends newsletters to its customer base with quarterly statements. The company wants to understand customer satisfaction with the newsletter.

#### ***The Solution:***

MRSI designed research that would help the company to understand awareness, recall, and overall satisfaction with the newsletter. Research was also designed to determine customers' next action once the newsletter was received (did they read it, throw it away, etc.). A survey was mailed to the company's customers with the option to complete and send back via mail or submit information online.

#### ***Business Implication:***

Research determined that there was high satisfaction with the newsletter's current format, yet some content topics were found to be of more interest than others. The insurance company decided to conduct further qualitative research to understand what articles or topics of interest were most beneficial to its customer base to further improve customer satisfaction and loyalty.

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### **ENFOQUE Step Two: *Explore Case Study***

#### ***The Issue:***

A manufacturer of a food product common among Hispanics had successful distribution and sales among Hispanics on the West Coast and Central United States, yet the company wanted to identify additional opportunities in other areas of the United States and in other market segments.

#### ***Solution:***

MRSI developed a quantitative research program designed to Explore opportunities for the client among Hispanics as well as the general market. Research focused on assessing different products being used now and obtaining reactions to different product concepts. The research also considered effects of acculturation on usage and product appeal, something the client had not even considered.

#### ***Business Implication:***

The research identified specific products and messages that should be incorporated into the client's advertising. Specifically, MRSI determined the best positioning was to leverage a key ingredient used to manufacture the product. Consumers were familiar with this ingredient and it communicated authenticity - a critical attribute. Moreover, using trend secondary data provided by the client, we recommended a product line enabling them to lead the trend.

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### **ENFOQUE Step Three: *Grow* Case Study**

#### ***The Issue:***

A service provider advertising through different media channels tracked the success of its Hispanic advertising along with general market advertising and wanted to better understand overall advertising effectiveness and growth opportunities.

#### ***Solution:***

MRSI developed a tracking study designed to highlight different areas in which to Grow the product. Our unique design enabled not only comparison to general market data, but also comparison to previous years ... before the company even worked with us.

#### ***Business Implication:***

We identified the effectiveness of the client's advertising program and went beyond the scope of the research to track which products were most appealing to Hispanics compared to the general market. The client was then able to direct more advertising focus on the products that fared best among Hispanics and the general market.

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### Feasibility Research

#### *The Issue:*

A software provider wanted to introduce a new inventory management product. Inventory management was a new application for the company and it wanted to gauge interest in the product among potential customers. They needed to survey Fortune 1,000 supply chain managers, a challenging respondent group for which they had no customer list or other means of readily pre-identifying or contacting potential respondents. Also, the concept's complexity presented a logistical challenge. Respondents would need to read a written concept description during the interview.

#### *The Solution:*

MRSI identified a good source of qualified respondents for a telephone survey. At the appropriate point in the survey, respondents were directed to a secure website that enabled them to view a written description of the concept.

#### *Business Implication:*

Although there was appreciable interest among supply chain managers in the client's comprehensive solution, the client had a strong barrier to entry in that it had little name recognition or credibility for this type of application. As a result, the client decided to acquire a recognized competitor in this market, and launched the new software under the acquired company's name.

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### **Name Testing**

#### *The Issue:*

A pharmaceutical manufacturer was interested in testing names for a new drug. Traditionally, the client conducted this research using qualitative in-depth interviews (IDI's) among physicians.

#### *The Solution:*

MRSI proposed an online quantitative survey instead of the traditional IDI's. Not only did this provide more robust and projectable data, it also reduced cost, allowing the client to survey both physicians and consumers.

#### *Business Implication:*

The online solution yielded better data at reduced cost and the pharmaceutical manufacturer was able to include both physician and consumer input to select an appropriate name for its new drug.

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### **Online Research**

#### ***The Issue:***

A client with a consumer targeted e-commerce site is interested in increasing the effectiveness of their site. Who is visiting my web site, what do they want, and will they be coming back?

#### ***The Solution:***

MRSI's iResearch® technology was used to conduct random intercept surveys on our client's web site. Information on visitor demographics, site likes/dislikes, revisit rates, and purchase intent was collected.

Analysis results show our client's site appeals to a narrow, homogeneous group that is especially interested in new product offerings. In addition, the analysis revealed that a large percentage of those visiting the site are interested in regular e-mail updates about new product offerings from the site.

#### ***Business Implications:***

With the incorporation of an e-mail update feature at their site, our client was able to boost top-of-mind awareness and more effectively reach the customers most likely to make purchases at their site.

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### **Pricing Research**

#### ***The Issue:***

A major U.S. retail chain offers a number of “store brand” products. These products are generally of comparable quality to national brand products but at a lower price. What is the optimum price for these store brand products that will maximize profits without sacrificing market share?

#### ***The Solution:***

MRSI designed research to test consumer demand within each product category. This test allowed consumers to view a number of scenarios with store brand products at various price points compared to national brands at fixed price points. Demand curves were created for each product category showing brand choice for the store brand and national brands at different price points for the store brands.

#### ***Business Implications:***

Some categories demonstrated an opportunity for raising price without sacrificing significant market share while other categories indicated that a lower price would lead to significant increases in market share. The retailer used the findings to adjust prices for several store brand products, resulting in increased profits.

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### **Pricing Research**

#### *The Issue:*

A telecom company had just introduced a new high-speed Internet service and wished to evaluate its pricing structure -- both the installation fee and the monthly fee for the service.

#### *The Solution:*

MRSI designed a phone study that included a series of "buy-response" questions to measure price elasticity for both services and create demand curves. Consumers were asked how willing they would be to purchase the new service first at different fees for installation, then at different price levels for the monthly service fee.

#### *Business Implications:*

Results showed that consumers were extremely price sensitive. Purchase intent was high with no installation fee, but was cut in half when even a modest charge of \$50 was imposed. At the current installation fee of \$200, purchase intent was very low. Also, demand for the service greatly increased as the monthly fee was lowered from the current \$50 to \$20. Our client was able to use this market information to optimize its fee structure and launch a successful new service.

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### **Product Demand Study**

#### ***The Issue:***

A pharmaceutical company wished to estimate market demand for a new weight maintenance drug.

#### ***The Solution:***

MRSI designed an in-person study where both physicians and patients were interviewed using a conjoint methodology. Both groups were exposed to a variety of product profiles for the new drug that presented different scenarios of price, effectiveness, and dosing. Physicians were asked the percentage of patients they would treat with the drug, and patients were asked their likelihood to ask their physician for the drug.

#### ***Business Implication:***

A series of discrete choice models were developed to allow the company to estimate demand for the new drug based on both patient-driven and physician-driven share. A simulator was designed from the model that allowed share to be recalculated based on different scenarios or assumptions.

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### **Product Label Design**

#### ***The Issue:***

A food manufacturer wished to completely redesign the label of one of its canned food products to update the brand's image, but to still be easy to find on the shelf (i.e., still communicate brand and key information about the product).

#### ***The Solution:***

MRSI designed a three-cell monadic Internet study comparing the current label to two new redesigned labels. A computer image of a shelf set including key competitors was flashed on the screen (for 2, 5 and 10 seconds total) and respondents were asked about shelf recall after each exposure.

#### ***Business Implication:***

The new designs were recalled, as well as the current design in a realistic shelf setting. In addition, the new designs were preferred 3 to 1 over the current label. They also served to improve the brand's image because they were seen as more modern, appetizing, and exciting. The stronger of the two new label designs was successfully expanded nationally.

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### Pharmaceutical Product Sampling

#### *The Issue:*

A pharmaceutical manufacturer was interested in better understanding the impact of sampling in one of its major disease state markets. Specifically, the manufacturer wanted to understand not only the overall relationship between sampling and physicians' prescribing intentions, but also how well each of its multiple products in this market "stacked up" against their competitors in physicians' minds with respect to sampling adequacy.

#### *The Solution:*

MRSI interviewed representative samples of physicians by specialty, via an online survey. Using regression and other statistical techniques, we determined that sample adequacy has a greater impact on physicians' prescribing for some products than others, for some product forms than others, and also varies by specialty. We also determined which of the manufacturer's brands were falling short of their competitors in providing adequate samples to the physicians.

#### *Business Implication:*

As a result of the research, the pharmaceutical manufacturer revamped its product sampling strategy. Based on both the "derived" sampling importance results and the sample adequacy brand performance findings, the manufacturer increased the overall budget of their sampling initiative. They reallocated the proportions (mix) of the budget that would be dedicated to each of their products within this market for each specialty, increasing the proportion for some brands/forms and decreasing it for others, in order to maximize their return on investment.

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### **Product Testing**

#### ***The Issue:***

Faced with impending government requirements on food labeling, a major consumer packaged goods manufacturer was prompted to reformulate a significant portion of its products. The client needed to find a way to reformulate those products with healthier ingredients without sacrificing quality and taste.

#### ***The Solution:***

MRSI was asked to partner with the client throughout the multi-year process. We developed intensive comparative product tests among heavy-users of each product to determine if the new formulations performed as well as, if not better than, the current in-market products. Testing was conducted across multiple product lines, as well as flavors within lines. MRSI worked closely with the client to identify areas for refinement until the new products were acceptable.

#### ***Business Implication:***

The client was able to successfully reformulate its products with healthier ingredients while continuing to meet consumer expectations for taste and quality. What's more, the client was able to comply with the new food labeling guidelines without any negative impact on sales or market share.

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### **Promotion Effectiveness**

#### ***The Issue:***

A client is in a mature market and is experiencing declining brand penetration. The client hopes to revitalize the brand using a national sampling program. Which sampling method is most cost-effective in gaining new users: in-store product sampling, direct mail sent with other samples, solo direct mail sampling, or newspaper inserts?

#### ***The Solution:***

A test/control telephone methodology was utilized to assess the effectiveness of the various sampling methods. After determining the purchase rate for each sampling method, a cost-benefit analysis was performed to identify the most cost-effective means of driving purchase intent.

#### ***Business Implication:***

The client was able to execute a cost-effective program and understood what the end result would be prior to implementation.

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### **Sales Environment**

#### ***The Issue:***

Reacting to the changing pharmaceutical sales environment, a leading pharmaceutical manufacturer wanted to improve the current sales representative detail process to meet both external and internal customer expectations and to create a valuable detail experience for physicians.

#### ***The Solution:***

MRSI designed an online quantitative research study to assess the existing sales detail environment and explore new opportunities for changes to the client's existing sales detail model. Utilizing advanced analytical techniques, we were able to go beyond the analysis items originally specified to quantify the importance of specific sales representative attributes as well as the detail components.

#### ***Business Implication:***

These results provided the client with prioritized action items to improve the detail experience as well as a quantified understanding of the current marketplace.

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### Tracking Research

#### *The Issue:*

A financial services provider measures its image and awareness among Hispanics, one of its key segments, in an annual tracking study. The company wanted to expand the study to better understand category behavior among Hispanics, as well as to specifically assess the impact of Spanish advertising on purchase behavior.

#### *The Solution:*

MRSI has partnered with the client in this study for several years and has developed a custom tracking program that drives marketing decisions. In addition, to measure the effectiveness of this particular advertising campaign, the study incorporated pre and post campaign telephone surveys in high density Hispanic markets.

#### *Business Implication:*

As a result of the research, the financial services provider learned that brand awareness and image had increased, leading the company to focus on more advertising to the Hispanic market in order to increase future purchase consideration among that group.

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### Tracking Research

#### *The Issue:*

As a result of the changing dynamics in the restaurant industry, as well as the evolving face of fast-food consumers, a major QSR chain was interested in expanding its annual tracking study to include specific ethnic groups.

#### *The Solution:*

MRSI has partnered with the client in this study for over ten years and during that time, the research has evolved from simply evaluating the image of the chain's beloved mascot into a comprehensive study that drives decision making throughout the company.

MRSI has developed a custom tracking program among general market consumers which provides the client insights that drive advertising and promotion decisions, drive communication to consumers, identify hot button issues among consumers, generate future product opportunities, and help the company to keep a pulse on competition. The study will now incorporate a larger number of surveys for targeted ethnic groups in order to track new trends in the marketplace.

#### *Business Implication:*

Not only will the research continue to drive decision making for the client's general market consumers, but now it will also enable the client to more specifically understand the preferences and needs of particular ethnic groups. This will allow the QSR chain to reach all of its customers more effectively and continue to grow its overall business.

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