

What Makes a Great Market Research Conference?

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1 Introduction

This study looks at what makes a great market research conference, in the opinion of market researchers, and includes a number of recommendations about how to improve the current array of conferences.

This study follows the success and popularity of my report in to what makes a great presentation [<http://thefutureplace.typepad.com/files/analysis-of-presenting-march-2009-2.pdf>]. By contrast with the presenting study, this project looks at the wider issue of what makes a great market research conference, and was conducted in collaboration with Brian Singh of Zinc Research and Rick Frank of Dufferin Research (note, Brian is also producing a report based on this project and I look forward of contrasting our observations, conclusions, and recommendations).

In considering this analysis the reader should keep in mind who the research was conducted amongst. The sample structure is outlined in the appendix, but the key things that the reader should take into account are shown below.

- The survey was conducted English, and will therefore tend to over-represent native English speakers.
- The sample will over-represent people who are in the same extended social networks (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, MRSpace) as the organisers of the project (e.g. the over-representation of Canada).
- The sample was not quota controlled by gender, country, role or other similar factor, so the reader may want to look at specific breaks by groups of particular interest to that reader.

2 Analysis

So, what do the data tell us? This section looks at the implications for conference attendees and organisers.

2.1 Great Conferences Attended

To get respondents into the right frame of mind, we asked people to think of a great conference they had attended and then asked them to describe what made it great. The first point of note is that no event was mentioned more than a few times, this is partly explained by the global spread of the respondents, but was also the first clue to the fact that different people want different things.

The key themes in these verbatims were:

- Great speakers/presentations/papers
- A combination of learning, stimulation, and interaction
- Networking
- Location/venue/social
- Not too large

With the possible exception of ‘Not too large’, these benefits were common to most groups of respondents, but as we shall see in the analysis, what people mean by terms such as great speakers, stimulation, and good networking differ.

2.2 What’s Important?

In order to ascertain the features that respondents thought were important, in designing/choosing a conference to attend, each respondent was asked to choose four features that they felt were most important.

Which four aspects are the most important to you?		
Good networking	59%	*****
Innovative ideas for implementation	49%	*****
Exciting keynote speakers	42%	*****
Interactive sessions/Workshops	37%	*****
Brand new material	31%	*****
Case studies	26%	*****
New business opportunities	25%	*****
Location	24%	*****
Copies of slides etc	18%	*****
Good social program	14%	*****
Clients/buyer presentations	14%	*****
Return on Investment	12%	*****
Presentations have written papers	10%	*****
New formats for sessions	9%	****
Best material from other conferences	8%	****
Trade show/exhibition	8%	****
Presentations from academics	7%	***
Base	236	

The top items in this list mirrored the items that people had mentioned in their verbatim when describing their favourite conference, i.e. networking, stimulation, the speakers, interaction, the material, and location were all mentioned.

The standout winner, in terms of stated importance, is *Good Networking*, with only *Innovative Ideas for implementation* coming close.

One challenge for conference organisers is to take a finding like 'Good Networking' and try to determine what people actually mean. In looking at the verbatim, which accompanied this question, it is clear that *Good Networking* means very different things to different people.

Of the 102 people who described what they meant by *Good Networking*, about one-third (35) focused on business development. For some people this meant finding partners (from other countries or other disciplines), but for most it meant people who might buy their 'stuff'. However, other groups of people had very different desires. General socialising, including catching up with old contacts, and meeting other people doing the same sort of work, accounted for 45 people. A small number of people (14) see the main element of networking as the chance to discuss ideas more deeply and to learn from peers.

Views about how the networking should be organised were equally varied, from informal drinks sessions and longer coffee breaks, through to structured events such as speed networking, quizzes, and games.

The pressure for organisers seems to be that some people feel that part of what they 'should' get for the money they pay is the chance to meet new clients. By contrast, some people feel that part of what they 'should' get for the money they pay is the chance to avoid people looking to 'sell'! This is clearly illustrated by the quantitative data; amongst the total sample 59% described networking as important, but amongst the 20 research buyers, only 5, i.e. 25%, said it was one of their four most important requirements.

Of the 17 items in the list, 9 scored less than 20%, indicating that they are less important than the people involved in designing the survey might have thought.

2.3 Variations in Stated Importance

Overall there were strong similarities between the different segments of respondents in terms of what they wanted. However, there were some interesting differences between segments. This section of the report highlights those cases where the difference between the total figure and the subgroup figure is over 15%, (this is a difference big enough to matter and to have a reasonable chance of being significant).

2.3.1 Written Papers, Total = 10%

The academics had a higher importance for Written Papers (29%, base=17), which makes intuitive sense, as they may want to refer to them. Of the 16 respondents from the 'Other' countries, 31% prioritised Written Papers, but is a small group, and a diverse group.

In Canada just one person from the 54 surveyed prioritised written papers (this finding did not meet my 15% difference rule, but is nevertheless quite striking and is statistically significant). Perhaps the role of written conference papers, white papers, and magazine articles should be re-visited. Perhaps more conferences should request magazine style articles, or alternatively are papers essential to the quality, even if the papers themselves are not seen as a vital end-product for most people.

2.3.2 Case Studies, Total=26%

In Asia Pacific (base=49), 49% prioritised Case Studies, making it well worth organisers prioritising Case Studies when organising conferences in this region. Amongst Clients/Research Buyers (base=20) 45% prioritised Case Studies, i.e. clients were amongst the most likely to want to hear what other clients were doing.

2.3.3 Exciting Keynote Speakers, Total=42%

Amongst people who had not attended a conference in the last two years (base=34) and those who had attended more than 10 conferences in the last year (base=11) the priority for keynotes was markedly lower, at 26% and 18%. A good keynote is very good, a bad keynote is very bad, this makes it a high risk item that needs prioritising.

2.3.4 Good Networking Opportunities, Total=59%

Amongst the 50-59 year olds (base=32) the priority for networking was even higher, at 75%. However, amongst clients/research buyers (base=20), only 25% prioritised good networking.

Amongst the people attending 6-to-10 conferences in the last two years (base=22), only 41% prioritised networking, but amongst those attending more than 10 conferences (base=11) the number jumped to 91%.

2.3.5 Interactive Sessions/Workshops, Total=37%

In the UK (base=25) only 16% prioritised interaction or workshops, this might be a corollary of the UK preferring one day conferences, which might reduce the time available for interactive sessions or workshops.

2.3.6 New Business Opportunities, Total=25%

Amongst those attending more than ten conferences in the last two years (base=11), 55% prioritised new business opportunities. However, amongst the clients/buyers (base=20) only 5% prioritised new business opportunities.

2.3.7 Presentations from Academics, Total=7%

Only the Academics (base=17) differed markedly from the Total, with 35% prioritising presentations from academics.

2.3.8 Session Takeaways/Copies of Slides, Total=18%

Clients/buyers (base=20) and 'Others' (base=11) were more likely to prioritise takeaways, with 35% and 36% selecting session takeaways.

2.3.9 What do People Mean by New Formats?

Conference organisers have been spending a lot of time over the last few years looking at new formats to increase the enjoyment and salience of their conferences. Therefore, New Formats was included as a feature in the importance section, but it was picked by only 9% of people, and there were no interesting sub-group variances.

However, it was also the subject of an open-ended question for those who picked it. Analysis of the verbatim shows that there is no magic bullet in terms of New Formats. There is no single, articulated, New Format that people are calling for. Some are looking for more interaction, some for

a mixture of idea rushes and longer papers, some optimistically want forums where new ideas might simply 'emerge'.

2.4 Feature Trade-Offs

The survey used opposed scales to encourage the respondents to look at alternatives that could be offered to them, in order to get a better idea of what they wanted.

This section looks at the results of these trade-offs, starting with those scales that produced the clearest preferences, and finishing with those where the number favouring one option was similar to the number favouring the other. The analysis divided the responses into three categories, i.e. prefer one end, prefer the other end, or picked the neutral position.

2.4.1 Theory vs Case Studies

The table below shows that 57% of respondents preferred a conference that focused on *Practice and Case Studies*, whereas only 17% preferred a conference to focus on *Theory and Ideas*. About a quarter of respondents wanted a blend of these two (or were not motivated by this difference).

Focus of material	Total	Education / Academia	UK	Europe
Prefer "Theory/ideas"	17%	20%	32%	19%
Neutral	26%	47%	29%	43%
Prefer "Practice/Case studies"	57%	34%	37%	40%
Base	213	15	24	28

The UK respondents were nearly as likely to say they wanted *Theory as Practice*. As the analysis proceeded it became apparent that the UK is an outlier in many areas. This could well be due to two factors a) most researchers are grouped around London, b) there are a large number of market researchers in the UK – because of these two factors, formats such as one day conferences become economically viable.

The other two groups with markedly lower scores for *Practice* were Europe and the Academics, although, in their case less focus on *Practice* was more likely to be expressed as being neutral between the two extremes.

2.4.2 Quality versus Innovation

The table below shows that, in total, researchers want to concentrate on *Innovative Techniques*, rather than *Research Quality*.

Focus of material	Total	Education / Academia	Facebook
Prefer "Improving research quality"	12%	7%	4%
Neutral	34%	60%	25%
Prefer "Innovative techniques"	54%	34%	70%
Base	215	15	40

The sample of people who completed the survey within Facebook were even more motivated towards *Innovative Techniques*, perhaps not surprisingly. The Academics were more likely to be neutral between these two extremes. I do not think that researchers feel that quality is not important, I suspect that it means that most researchers want to leave it to others to deal with.

2.4.3 Meeting Buyers or Providers

In total, the respondents wanted to focus on *Meeting Research Buyers*, rather than meeting *Research Providers*. This trend was especially true in the UK, where two-thirds favoured meeting *Research Buyers*.

Nature of conference	Total	Education / Academia	Client / research buyer	UK	Zero Conferences in last 2 years
Prefer "Meeting research providers"	21%	67%	34%	4%	20%
Neutral	29%	26%	33%	29%	55%
Prefer "Meeting research buyers"	50%	7%	34%	67%	23%
Base	212	15	18	24	29

Clients tended to have a balance in their scores in terms of who they wanted to meet. People who had not been to a conference in the last two years were also more likely to be neutral. Academics were much more likely, than the Total, to want to meet *Research Providers*.

2.4.4 Meeting Researchers or Non-researchers

This question had a slightly different nuance to the research buyer/provider split, looking at meeting *Researchers* versus *Non-researchers* (such as marketers).

Nature of conference	Total	Education / Academia
Prefer "Meeting researchers"	47%	67%
Neutral	33%	34%
Prefer "Meeting non-researchers"	19%	0%
Base	213	15

The big exception to the majority view was provided by the academics, of whom two-thirds wanted to meet *Researchers* and none wanted to meet *Non-researchers*.

2.4.5 Who Should Run the Conference?

Almost half the respondents would prefer market research conferences to be run by *Research Organisations*.

Nature of conference	Total	UK
Prefer "Run by research organisations"	47%	24%
Neutral	35%	58%
Prefer "Run by non-research bodies"	18%	16%
Base	211	24

In the UK there is a large percentage that is neutral as to who should run conferences, perhaps reflecting the success of conferences in the UK such as Insite and WARC.

2.4.6 How Long Should Speakers Speak for?

In aggregate, this question does not appear to be too important in terms of differences, with 41% preferring *45 minutes*. However, there are some large sub-group differences.

Length of sessions	Total	UK	Asia Pacific	USA	10+ Conferences in last 2 years
Prefer "15 minutes per speaker"	23%	41%	40%	10%	40%
Neutral	36%	42%	40%	34%	50%
Prefer "45 minutes per speaker"	41%	16%	22%	57%	10%
Base	219	24	46	56	10

In the UK and Asia only 16% and 22% favour the *45 minute* slot (and amongst people attending more than ten conferences in the last year this drops to just 10%). However, in the USA 57% preferred the *45 minute option*, with just 10% preferring the *15 minutes* per speaker option.

2.4.7 Focus of Ideas

The Total sample was fairly evenly split between wanting *Ideas about research*, *Ideas to grow business*, and being neutral.

Focus of material	Total	60+	Client / research buyer	Education / Academia	0 conferences in last 2 years
Prefer "Ideas to grow business"	32%	49%	6%	0%	13%
Neutral	29%	14%	28%	20%	52%
Prefer "Ideas about research"	40%	35%	67%	79%	33%
Base	212	14	18	15	29

The people aged over 60 years were more likely prefer conferences focusing on *Ideas to grow business*, whereas Research buyers and Academics were more likely to prefer *Ideas about research*,

and the people who have not attended a conference in the last two years were more likely to be neutral between the two extremes.

2.4.8 Length of Conference

The Total sample was fairly evenly distributed between preferring *3 days*, *1 day*, and being neutral between the two.

Length of conference	Total	Aged over 60	Education / Academia	10+ conferences in last 2 years	1 conference in last 2 years	UK
Prefer "1 Day"	28%	0%	6%	0%	45%	45%
Neutral	35%	50%	30%	50%	23%	37%
Prefer "3 Days"	37%	50%	65%	50%	34%	16%
Base	220	14	17	10	27	24

People aged over 60, from academia, and those who have attended more than ten conferences were much more likely to prefer *3 days* or be neutral between *1 day* and *3 days*. By contrast, the respondents from the UK and those who have only attended one conference in the last two years were much likely to prefer *1 day*.

2.4.9 Other Disciplines?

The total sample were fairly evening divided in terms of whether they preferred a conference *Focused on market research*, on *Other disciplines*, or neutral between the two.

Nature of conference	Total	60+	6 to 10 conferences in last 2 years	Facebook
Prefer "Focused on MR"	35%	57%	20%	24%
Neutral	35%	21%	33%	32%
Prefer "Looking at other disciplines"	29%	21%	48%	45%
Base	217	14	21	40

The respondents aged over 60 were more likely to prefer conferences *Focused on market research*. By contrast, people who have attended 6-to-10 conferences in the last two years and those who completed the survey via Facebook were less likely to prefer the *Focus on market research*.

2.4.10 Focus of the Programme

The Total sample was almost perfectly split between preferring a *Targeted programme*, a *Broad programme*, and being neutral between the two.

Nature of conference	Total	Client / research buyer	18-29	UK	Facebook
Prefer "Targeted program"	34%	12%	41%	16%	30%
Neutral	33%	50%	46%	33%	22%
Prefer "Broad program"	33%	39%	14%	50%	49%
Base	212	18	37	24	40

The research buyers, those from the UK, and those who answered the survey via Facebook, were more likely either prefer a *Broad programme* or be neutral about the programme and less likely to prefer the more *Targeted programme*. By contrast, the 18-29 year olds were less likely to prefer the *Broad programme*.

2.4.11 Type of Speakers

Over half the respondents were neutral between preferring *New speakers* and 'Well known' faces.

Type of speakers	Total	Education / Academia	Asia Pacific
Prefer "New speakers"	28%	12%	12%
Neutral	56%	71%	68%
Prefer "Well-known faces"	16%	18%	20%
Base	218	17	46

The respondents in Asia Pacific and from Academia were less likely to prefer *New speakers* and more likely to be neutral between new speakers and well known faces.

2.5 Reaching Out Beyond the Research Community

Amongst the team creating this research project there was a feeling that Market Research conferences, or perhaps the conferences we choose to attend, should reach beyond just market researchers. This was explored by asking people to assign themselves to one of four cells.

Statement	%
Marketing research conferences should focus on research, and target researchers and research-users.	26%
Marketing research conferences should refocus their efforts on raising the profile of the industry and the perceived value of marketing research, and target marketers, advertisers and other professional disciplines.	27%
I equally identify with both statements.	43%
I do not identify with either statement.	4%
Base	208

The results show that nearly half the respondents agree equally with both positions, i.e. that we should focus our efforts on research, researchers, and research users AND focus our efforts on raising the profile of the industry and the perceived value of market research. Amongst the just over half who accepted that you can't 'focus' on everything, the split was almost 50:50 between being focused on research and focused on the external perception.

2.6 The Impact of Social Media

In some recent online discussions, for example in LinkedIn, there have been people suggesting that the growth of social media might reduce the need or desire for people to meet in a physical sense. This was explored in the survey and the key results were:

Many researchers are using social media such as social networks and Twitter to connect with each other and new techniques such as webinars. Do you think the growth in these approaches will make it more or less likely that you will still attend conventional (i.e. physical) conferences?	%
No difference	64%
Less likely	11%
More likely	25%

Nearly two-thirds thought it would make no difference, with the rest splitting their vote with 25% for more likely and 11% for less likely.

The most interesting sub-group difference was based on age. The older the respondents were, the more likely they were to say that it would make no difference (with 79% of the over 60s saying no difference). The younger people were more likely they were to say that it would make a difference (with only 44% of the 18-to-29 olds saying no difference). In all the age bands *more likely* was ahead of *less likely*, amongst those who thought it would make a difference.

Similarly, respondents in Asia Pacific and our 'Other' group were less likely to say 'No difference', but they were also much more likely to say it would increase attendance. Perhaps they were hoping for better guidance on which conferences were worth attending.

2.7 Other Thoughts

As befits any survey, the final question was a request for advice from the respondents. The verbatims mostly covered the points raised above, but they also raised new issues and clarified others.

2.7.1 Venue/Location

There are quite a few people who are looking for a nice location, for example "*Location, location, location. Make it fun to go to the conference*" and "*I think networking is more natural when induced by great social opps in great locations*".

However, there are also people who think convenient locations is important, for example "*a central venue that isn't too far to travel to a conference with just a one night stay*" and "*More local conferences that don't require spending money on travel*".

2.7.2 Webcasts/Video/Slideshare

Many respondents wanted conference organisers to learn from Web 2.0 and from TED (who publish their speeches on the Web). Examples of the comments were *"ALWAYS post slides to Slideshare or similar after the fact."*, *"let people with geographical distance attend / participate via the web"*, and *"Much much better leveraging of social media to ensure the ideas have a life beyond the conference hall."*.

2.7.3 Quality of Speakers

One of the biggest issues is quality of speakers and several thoughts and ideas were expressed, for example *"better quality of speakers who are not doing blatant sales pitches, and who are well-rehearsed"*, *"Make sure speakers material is unique and interesting...too many papers are just sales pitches"*, *"All conferences should be based upon juried papers - it improves the quality no end"*, and *"If the research is not good enough, it should not be presented"*.

2.7.4 Control

One interesting feature of several of the verbatims was that they seemed to assume a level of control that organisers and chairs may not have. For example *"Make people network with each other upfront so they can already make contacts and appointments before they come to the conference"*., and using control in the opposite direction *"2) except in one area where vendors show off their wares, the whole conference is a 'no brand, no sales zone'"*.

Whilst other suggestions would be unlikely to be economically viable, and may in some markets not even be legal (under competition laws), for example *"Limit the number of vendors in attendance so as to manage the ratio of vendors to end users most effectively. This will make everyone better off."*.

3 Overall Conclusions

Having conducted the survey and the analysis, I think this study is a great example of where the message does not lie within the data, it lies in combining the information in the survey, with the knowledge one gains by being involved in the conference process.

The responses suggest that most market researchers are relatively conservative, and in many cases feel more comfortable dealing with other people like them, rather than engaging new disciplines and domains. However, I believe the industry needs to move forwards, and this has impacted on my conclusions and recommendation, i.e. I am, to an extent, saying what I think researchers need, rather than just what they want.

In writing these conclusions and thoughts, I have drawn on my own experience as a conference producer, a member of various conference committees, a frequent chair of conference sessions, a frequent conference speaker, and a frequent conference attendee (attending over ten conferences a year).

3.1 People are Different

The first thing that jumps out of the data is that different people want different things. There are people who want one day, highly focused conferences, where researchers talk to researchers about new ideas and techniques. Equally, there are people who want three days in a lovely location with

the chance to network with people who might want to buy their products, and for whom the papers and presentations are almost an optional extra.

Conference organisers have to decide whether they are going to try to organise something that appeals very strongly to one group, and either exclude or dissatisfy other groups, or whether to produce something that appeals to lots of people, but runs the risk of delighting none of them.

One response to this dilemma is what Nick Coates, the organiser of the 2009 UK MRS Conference, described as an 'Unconference'. Nick created the London 2009 Conference on the model of the Glastonbury Rock Festival. No, overall theme, lots of different things happening, and people built their own conference from what was happening all around them. At its first attempt it was at least partly successful, and in many ways the ESOMAR 2009 Congress was very similar, some people attending interactive Master Classes, others attending formal papers, whilst some honed their performing skills in the Research Idol competition.

3.2 Some Wants are Contradictory

Many people are calling for higher quality presentations, but they were also calling for them to be unique, for example *"Do not repeat papers across conferences e.g. the same paper at QRCA and ESOMAR Qual conference in one year."*

IMHO, there are two problems with this laudable aspiration.

The first problem is that if somebody produces a great paper and shows it to say 200 people at an ESOMAR Online conference in Sydney, most of the industry will never get to see it, even if it is the best paper presented anywhere on the globe that year. If all presentations were posted to the web after the conference this problem would go away, but there are cost implications in filming and editing presentations to the right standard (and a mindset issue that I will come to later).

The second problem is that it takes a long time to prepare a good conference presentation. There are probably only a 200 to 300 really good presenters, globally, who can afford the time and money to present at research conferences. But even they simply can't afford the time or money to try and generate entirely new presentations every time.

If people are saying that every presentation has to be wholly new and unique, then I suspect they are asking for a world where the majority presentations are going to be second rate, because it will be too expensive to produce first rate material that is only going to be used once.

However, if people are saying that presentations should always be tweaked to have something that is unique to that performance, then that is an aspiration that could and should be delivered.

As an example of the time and cost here is analysis of my time. I produce about 15 conference presentations a year, some on my own, some in collaboration. I would estimate that the shortest amount of time I would take in preparation is about 20 hours, if I have been asked to talk about a topic I am already familiar with, and if there is no written paper. However, if a paper requires research, fieldwork, collaborative writing, and substantial review, then I would estimate the amount of time is more like 200 to 300 hours, for example the paper I presented at the ESOMAR Beijing APAC Conference (and which combined the efforts of five companies, several authors, across four

countries), consumed well over 250 hours between the various contributors. If that time had been charged, even at cost, it would have been tens of thousands of dollars.

3.3 Get Real About Buying and Selling

Many respondents seem to want research buyers to attend conferences in greater numbers, to pay to attend, to make themselves available for sales opportunities, and in most cases not to present papers (a few people want clients to present, but most did not prioritise them).

However, when the boot is on the other foot, researcher buyers seem to want the sponsorship money from panel and software vendors, but they do not want to be expected to spend much time with them.

This issue will have to be resolved or the tension will remain indefinitely.

4 Recommendations

Notes, these are very much 'opinion Ray Poynter'. They are based on the survey data, the analysis, and my conclusions, but they remain my view, they may not reflect the views of either the other members of the team who created this project, or any of the people I work with.

1. **Improve Descriptions.** The descriptions of conferences and sessions could be improved to allow potential attendees to decide if they want to attend. If a presenter plans to present something similar to material they have presented elsewhere, then the description should say so. The description of a keynote should outline what he or she is going to say, perhaps post a podcast interview with the keynote in advance.
2. **Post material to the Web.** The main reason to do this, IMHO, is to increase the value of presenting to presenters. If they know that a recording of their presentation will be posted to the Web (like TED <http://www.ted.com/>) they will be prepared to spend more time and money in creating and rehearsing a better presentation. Posting these presentations will not, in my opinion, reduce conference attendances. Conferences provide networking, interactions, immersion, and a physical sense of what is going on. At the very least, and not expensively, all the slides could be posted with the voice synched to it.
3. **Focus or Unconference?** Each event should determine whether it is an event with a mission, such as the Sawtooth Choice Modelling conferences in the US or the B2B BIG conferences in the UK, or whether it is a 'gathering'. The end point for an Unconference is probably going to be a framework organised by the centre, but with Fringe (think Edinburgh Festival) which could allow each attendee to 'build' their own conference.
4. **Formats.** Conferences need to offer a variety of formats, even within a one day conference. There needs to be a mix of shorter and longer sessions, lectures and interactions. However, this is very much dependent on the next point.
5. **Quality.** Conferences need to establish higher quality standards, especially for presentations. I think that at the very least this means full rehearsals, with the real prospect of presentations being cancelled if they are not good enough (including if they can't be completed within the time slot).
6. **Publish the ratings!** The DMD, the Danish Market Research Day, published the ratings for the conference and the speakers on the Web. This is a proper response to the modern desire

for feedback and transparency. I suggest that all conferences should publish their scores, but I do feel they should probably tell people that this will be done at the time they are submitting their synopses.

One area where I am still struggling with is networking. Conferences need to find a method of facilitating people wanting to meet, and facilitating people saying no without seeming to be too rude. I do feel that we need to find more contrived mixing, for example putting people into treasure hunt teams, pre-assigned seating at meals, or getting them into small workshop groups, for example groups of six.

5 Appendix

5.1 The Project Team

The project was conducted as a collaboration between:

Ray Poynter, The Future Place <http://www.thefutureplace.com/>

Brian Singh, Zinc Research <http://www.zincresearch.com/>

Rick Frank, Dufferin Research <http://www.dufferinresearch.com/>

The scripting, hosting, and data preparation were all handled by Dufferin Research.

5.2 Sample

The data were collected between 30th June 2009 and 5th August.

The invitations were distributed via various networks that the project organisers were members of, including Facebook groups such as The Big List of Market Researchers <http://www.facebook.com/groups.php?id=637847066#/group.php?gid=18095664464> and via other networks such as MRSpace <http://mrspacem.com/>.

Respondents were offered the choice to complete the survey in a free standing online survey or via a survey hosted within Facebook.

194 people completed the survey and a further 82 provided sufficient information to be included in the analysis, making a grand total of 276, this means that the base per question varies from 205 to 276.

The data include responses from 41 countries. The table below shows the countries, the responses per country, and the way that the countries have been allocated into regions. Note, Canada, US and UK have been broken out as a separate codes because of the large number of responses from these countries.

	Total	Canada	UK	USA	Europe	Asia Pacific	Other
Total	276	58	35	69	39	57	18
Argentina	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Australia	16	-	-	-	-	16	-
Belgium	7	-	-	-	7	-	-
Cambodia	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
Canada	58	58	-	-	-	-	-
Chile	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
China	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
Denmark	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
France	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
Germany	3	-	-	-	3	-	-
Greece	6	-	-	-	6	-	-
Hungary	1	-	-	-	1	-	-

Market Research Conferences

India	11	-	-	-	-	11	-
Indonesia	6	-	-	-	-	6	-
Israel	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Italy	3	-	-	-	3	-	-
Japan	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
Jordan	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Malaysia	3	-	-	-	-	3	-
Netherlands	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
New Zealand	3	-	-	-	-	3	-
Norway	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
Pakistan	2	-	-	-	-	2	-
Philippines	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
Poland	2	-	-	-	2	-	-
Romania	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
Russia	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
Singapore	6	-	-	-	-	6	-
Slovenia	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
South Africa	4	-	-	-	-	-	4
Spain	5	-	-	-	5	-	-
Sweden	2	-	-	-	2	-	-
Switzerland	1	-	-	-	1	-	-
Taiwan	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
Thailand	4	-	-	-	-	4	-
Turkey	2	-	-	-	2	-	-
UAE	5	-	-	-	-	-	5
UK	35	-	35	-	-	-	-
USA	69	-	-	69	-	-	-
Venezuela	1	-	-	-	-	-	1
Vietnam	1	-	-	-	-	1	-
Other	4	-	-	-	-	-	4

5.3 Key Sample Characteristics

The tables below set out the counts and percentages on the key characteristics. All respondents had to answer these questions to be included in the analysis.

Country

Canada	58	21%
UK	35	13%
USA	69	25%
Europe	39	14%
Asia Pacific	57	21%
Other	18	7%
Total	276	100%

Conferences attended in last 2 years

0	36	13%
1	33	12%
2 to 5	162	59%
6 to 10	30	11%
10+	15	5%
Total	276	100%

Location of interview

Freestanding survey	227	82%
Embedded in Facebook	49	18%
Total	276	100%

Age

18-29	55	20%
30-39	93	34%
40-49	75	27%
50-59	37	13%
60+	16	6%
Total	276	100%

Company / Status

Agency / research provider	155	56%
Client / research buyer	23	8%
Freelance / Consultant	38	14%
Education / Academia	27	10%
Software / system provider	11	4%
Sample / panel provider	7	3%
Other	15	5%
Total	276	100%