

# marketer

Volume 25, Issue 6, December 2006

The Society for Marketing Professional Services | Published Bimonthly

## on point

*Transforming Public Facilities,  
Project Delivery, Client Service*

A Conversation with Gena L.  
Abraham, Georgia State  
Financing and Investment  
Commission and Georgia  
Building Authority

## research

CRM for Professional Services  
Firms: An SMPS Foundation  
Research Report

## market watch

K-12 Markets

## next edge

Know Your Clients Better

## bookshelf

*The Fred Factor*



SMPS

**Build Business!**  
Register for the  
2007 National Conference by  
January 31 and save!  
Details enclosed.

## Know Your Clients Better

BY CRAIG PARK, FSMPS, ASSOCIATE AIA

Successful building or construction projects address the strategic facilities or infrastructure needs of a client and the client's business model in ways that help them gain competitive advantage, improve productivity, and sustain growth. This applies equally to both private-sector (for-profit) companies and public-sector (non- or not-for profit) institutions, which also face competitive challenges in their particular market sector. For the professional services marketer, the challenge is understanding these client-focused strategic needs and helping your firm develop appropriate communications, proposals, and in turn, solutions.

Market research into the specific needs of a particular client or sector is a fundamental part of that effort, as evidenced by the first domain of marketing defined by SMPS. Old school practice relied on knowledge gained through individual relationships and painstaking, library-intensive searches. Today, the Internet not only offers such a myriad of data that it is often hard to know where to start but also hosts sites and technology-enabled tools that can simplify and accelerate the research into background information on a potential client and their specific needs.

### How to start

If you don't have time to do your own research, you should start at Quirk's. For 20 years, *Quirk's Marketing Research Review* has been providing practical applications in marketing research. Its mission is to be *the* marketing research information source. In addition to regular editorial content, it publishes nine of the most complete and accurate specialty directories of research providers, not to mention the *Researcher SourceBook*<sup>™</sup>, which lists over 7,300 companies worldwide. The Quirk's mission is to provide practical, valuable, and useful information to the marketing research industry.

*Quirk's Review* is designed to give practical examples of research in action, provide expert advice on research techniques, and introduce the latest in new product information and survey findings. It includes case histories, research techniques and trends,

use of statistical data, news and notes on marketing and marketing research from a variety of media sources, names of note, product and service updates, research industry news, and much more.

### Where to start

The first place to look is the client's Web site, but that's just a start. I always look under "About" to gain an understanding of the client's fundamental vision and mission. It's also a good place to find the names of key decision-makers and leaders. The "News" section often will post recent releases on major initiatives and hires.

A publicly traded company will have a section of its site devoted to "Investor Relations" that will include detailed financial announcements (including plans for capital expenditures often associated with building initiatives). Institutional organizations may not be as free with their financial plans but surprisingly will often make their short- and long-range capital-spending budgets available on request.

### The industry standard

A stalwart of the market research community is **Hoover's**, providing comprehensive company, industry, and market intelligence. Hoover's is a subscription-based service (\$3,000 to \$8,000 and more for 5–10 users) that provides extensive data on 43,000 public and private companies in 600 industries. Its Web-based service provides detailed company fact sheets, company descriptions and key numbers, top executives, and much more.

You can use Hoover's to build company and executive lists for direct-mail campaigns. Its built-in research tools can find data based on keyword, location, key numbers, or industry, allowing you to do comparisons between different companies in the same industry. The site posts news, initial public offerings (IPOs), and financial comparisons. It also features breaking news from 3,000 sources. For anyone wanting to do business with clients in the private and public markets, Hoover's is a great tool.

## See the light

**Northern Light's Center for Market Intelligence** is another data warehouse of invaluable information on market and competitive trends, news, and statistics for a variety of industries. Northern Light is also a subscription service ranging from \$9.95/month for a single user to \$5,000/year for up to 50 users.

Divided into 20 Market Intelligence Centers, the service concentrates the most important news, analysis and commentary, company information, and resource links for an industry into an easy-to-navigate and utilize Web site. Approximately 50 additional Market Intelligence Centers are planned over the next year.

Each center features "Live Queries," which are professionally edited and saved searches, in many cases with 30 or more search terms, which extract the maximum value from the search technology and included content set of news, trade journals, and business Web sites. Live Queries can be saved and customized as Search Alerts by a user, which is a handy option for those users who want e-mail alerts when new material becomes available each day.

## Research studies

For even more in-depth studies, **MarketResearch.com** provides the world's largest and continuously updated collection of market research. It offers more than 110,000 market research reports from 550 leading global publishers. Reports are available for purchase (\$25 to \$5,000) by market sector and sub-sector and cover a broad spectrum of industry and consumer trends.

MarketResearch offers custom updates of the latest research available in your market and interest areas. An e-mail notification that lets you know when new research in your areas of interest is added to the MarketResearch.com web site, keeping you abreast of coverage of your market, including product development, competitive analysis, and trends.

MarketResearch also provides specialists who have in-depth knowledge of the publishers and the various types of reports in their respective industries. The specialists can provide unbiased and qualitative insights on which reports will best meet your needs and help focus your search (and purchase dollars).

## Find your voice


Based on the theory that if you want to know what a client really wants, one of the most important components of effective market research is the survey. Client and satisfaction

## Resources & References

⌘ Hoover's	www.hoovers.com
⌘ MarketResearch	www.marketresearch.com
⌘ Northern Light	www.centerformarketresearch.com
⌘ <i>Quirk's Marketing Research Review</i>	www.quirks.com
⌘ Voxco	www.voxco.com

surveys can provide an excellent source for competitive (and often self-) analysis. If you want cutting-edge technology for surveying, tailored for the needs of market research, look no further than **Voxco**. Voxco is a global software developer specializing in applications for collecting and processing strategic data. Based in Montreal, it has a strong presence in North America and Europe, with branches in France, United Kingdom, Germany, and the USA. Voxco provides both expert professional services and an integrated suite of multi-purpose tools, including powerful and user friendly software for automated telephone interviewing, web surveying, and personal interviewing. All these collection tools can be used together on the same survey. Voxco also provides extensive statistical analysis tools.

## The deep dig

I have always believed the key to professional service is to find new clients who look like your best (and most profitable) current (or past) customers. Effective market research is an excellent way to identify those opportunities. So whether you hire out or do your own research, conduct customer satisfaction surveys or market research studies, don't be afraid to "go deep." The more knowledge you have into the history, business practices, and fundamental needs of your clients, the closer you are to providing truly strategic services that not only meet their needs but improve their operations. 



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

**Contributing Editor Craig Park, FSMPS, Associate AIA**, is vice president and chief marketing officer for LEO A DALY ([www.leoadaly.com](http://www.leoadaly.com)), an international architectural, planning, engineering, and interior design firm based in Omaha, NE. A former SMPS National President, Craig can be reached [craig@craigpark.com](mailto:craig@craigpark.com).