



# Bulletin

A bi-monthly MRSS newsletter

Issue 3, October 2003



**Guest speaker at MRSS Breakfast  
Talk on Aug 21, 2003:**

**Mr. John Smurthwaite  
Chairman, Asia Pacific, TNS Sofres**

***"Class or Cash? Harmonizing  
Socio-Economic Classifications  
across Asia"***

## ideas!

24-26 September 2003

International exhibition and conference  
on creative ideas, tools and technology  
for marketing in Asia

John Smurthwaite, a stalwart of the market research industry in South East Asia (since 1977), chose this subject as a 'hot' topic for practitioners, particularly for those regularly comparing survey data across countries in Asia. He used his talk to describe what systems are in use at present, not only in Asia but also in the US and Europe. He went on to recommend the adoption of the ESOMAR SEC in Asia.

Though first world countries use Socio Economic Class (SEC) instead of income to define populations, in Asia, market research companies have struggled to come up with a suitable system, perhaps because of a perceived inability to measure SEC (as in the Philippines). In India, however, the industry has in fact adapted the ESOMAR SEC system and it is working well.

Traditionally, family income has been used as a proxy for SEC, but in Asia where the family structure is extended and the head of household may not be the main income earner (MIE), this led to problems. Using data from Singapore, John showed that though income was a good predictor of product ownership, income is often understated or refused, and therefore less reliable.

He said that SEC is a good predictor of income as well as lifestyle, making it more useful for advertisers and media selection. Being based on education and occupation, it is also easy to obtain information from respondents and is therefore more reliable.

And, of course, global companies (especially fmcg) use SEC in Europe / US, and want a consistent approach in Asia. John felt that countries like Singapore, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Korea and Malaysia could adopt the ESOMAR standard classification for Main Income Earners (MIEs). ♦

The ideas! Conference and Exhibition on creative ideas, tools and technology for marketing in Asia was held at Suntec Singapore from 24 – 26 September.

MRSS participated as an endorser of the Conference. Chong Lee Sah (CLS Research Solutions) was in the Programme Committee, and several MRSS members were speakers – Nichola Rastrik (Millward Brown), Karen Newton (ACNielsen) as well as Priya Tandan (TNS).

The MRSS stand at the Exhibition was manned by member volunteers and attracted many visitors. Clearly, this was a great opportunity for building awareness of the Society.

We hope to participate in similar events in 2004. ♦

## Acquisitions/ Mergers...

### Synovate boosts Asia Pacific capabilities with key Indian acquisition

Global market research company Synovate announced its full acquisition of Blackstone Market Facts in India.

Headquartered in Mumbai, Blackstone Market Facts is one of the largest full-service research agencies in India, with twelve offices around the sub-continent.

Adrian Chedore, Chief Executive Officer of Synovate Global said that Blackstone Market Facts becomes Synovate's first fully-owned Indian operation.

"Synovate already had partial ownership - 25 per cent - of the company, but we felt the Indian market had so much potential that we wanted to ensure our full involvement in and commitment to what we see as a stellar future.

Alok Shanker, Managing Director of Blackstone Market Facts said the deal would give the company the scale, scope and reach it needs to take full advantage of opportunities in the Indian marketplace.

Synovate will move quickly to integrate Blackstone Market Facts into the group, giving existing clients in India immediate access to all Synovate research solutions and the global network of more than 80 offices in 47 countries. ♠

### And...

### Synovate has acquired Censydiam NV, a Belgium research business.

Censydiam employs 170 staff worldwide. Over the next few months the company will rebrand as Synovate Censydiam, a specialist research division.

Censydiam was founded in 1987 and is renowned for its advances in psychodynamic research. Their approach provides more insightful understanding of motivations and satisfaction strategies that the consumer has in respect to different relations or brands. These findings enable product communication to factor in how brands need to be positioned on a global basis for advertising and marketing, whilst taking into account regional or local differences.

"Many of the world's blue-chip companies look to Censydiam's unique style and depth of reporting to create outstanding new product concepts, stronger product launches and more powerful branding," says Synovate CEO Adrian Chedore. "We look forward to offering their insight-driven solutions to our clients worldwide." ♠

### Update on TNS/ NFO Merger

The process of merging TNS and NFO began about 3 months ago; under the management of a team comprising TNS and NFO representatives. In the South East Asian region, Clive Little has been appointed as Regional Director of South East Asia.

Grant Bertoli, currently Managing Director of TNS Singapore, is the Managing Director of the new combined operations of TNS and NFO in Singapore.

Wade Garland, General Manager of NFO Singapore, will be relocating to Hong Kong as Deputy Managing Director of the TNS/NFO business there.

NFO's strong business in the FMCG sector and branded solutions (particularly in the area of tracking and stakeholder management/customer satisfaction), will compliment TNS's strength in business sectors such as IT/telco, healthcare and automotive. The combined operations will create a 'top 3' custom research business in Singapore. Full time staff will be around 65+.

More importantly, the combined organisation will bring together the best of the two companies and will be even more committed and in a position to provide high quality marketing information and services to our clients in Singapore and elsewhere. ♦

## More industry happenings...

### The Research Pacific Group Updates Brand Identity



The Research Pacific Group has announced significant changes to its brand identification, in order to better reflect the organization's values and continued emergence as one of the Asia Pacific region's leading marketing research firms.

One of the major changes is a redesigned logo. The new logo, referred to as "Scaling Heights", comprises three ascending pyramids bathed in light at their tips.

According to Kevin Reagan, The Research Pacific Group's Executive Vice President, the new logo reflects the core values and brand personality of The Research Pacific Group,

"One of the key points we wanted to bring out was that of growth: historic, current, and aspirational. The escalating of the visual from left to right is designed to do this. The "Sharpness" of the design was a conscious decision to reflect our Discipline in Managing Research, Sharpness of thinking, and Precision in approaching research issues. We deliberately focused on developing an "Open Design" with our "Float" of the brand name above the "heights" suggesting "openness", "adaptability", and "Innovation (thinking outside the box)" -- all integral components of who we are."

Along with a new logo The Research Pacific Group also launched a new "brand hook" to be used in their communications -- "Research Solutions and Insights... Across Asia". §

### ASIA INSIGHT RELOCATES TO EXPANDED FACILITIES AT GATEWAY WEST, SINGAPORE

#### Research firm celebrates 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary and new office move with Asian-themed Cocktail Party

Singapore, 1 October 2003- Recently celebrating its 7<sup>th</sup> anniversary on 10 September 2003, at its new office at Gateway West, Asia Insight held an Asian-themed cocktail bash for more than 50 clients and associates. With staff dressed in their ethnic best, it was a mini Asia get-together with specially concocted cocktails, and an exciting programme featuring marketing experts Diana Ee-Tan from Raffles International, and Anders Kager from Nokia who shared trade secrets behind their successful brands. The evening was topped with an entertaining mock Panel Session of high-profiled women who gave insights to who are really the 'hidden decision makers' of today.

### Research International sweeps the board at ESOMAR Global brands paper wins top awards

At this year's 56th ESOMAR Congress, Research International was the recipient of the awards for both the best paper in any field of market research and the best case history.

'Managing global brands to meet consumer expectations', by Malcolm Baker, Global Director, Research International Qualitatif; Earl Taylor, Research International, USA and Greet Sterenberg, Research International Qualitatif, Netherlands won The Fernanda Monti Award for best paper and also the award for best case history.

Members of the international jury praised the paper as "highly actionable and useful to global marketers - an outstanding contribution to the topic of globalisation." Research International has examined consumer perceptions of global brands worldwide. The winning paper was based on last year's Research International Observer qualitative study of consumer global brands with additional quantitative data gathered this year. The paper examined the value in 'globalness' and how global brand owners could achieve a balance between global reach and local feel. ♦



Said Ms Pearly Tan, Managing Director of Asia Insight, "We are certainly proud to announce that Asia Insight is entering its eighth year, with each year being marked by steady growth rates. For the many opportunities presented to us over the years, and for the countless of studies we have conducted spanning 14 countries in Asia, Europe and US, we have only our clients to thank for." ♦

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### NEXT MRSS BREAKFAST TALK

**PLACE: EAST INDIA ROOM,  
RAFFLES HOTEL**

**DATE/ TIME : NOV 13, 2003/ 8.30 A.M.**

### **Eating The Big Fish - The 8 Credos of Being A Challenger Brand"**

By

**Gregory Ho (AXN Asia)**

Gregory Ho is Vice President of Marketing at AXN, Asia's first and only action and adventure channel owned by Sony Pictures Entertainment. Greg oversees the network's Asia-wide viewer & trade advertising and promotional activities, Internet efforts, on-the ground events, PR and corporate communications.

### **WATCH OUT FOR CHRISTMAS MIXER DETAILS TO BE ANNOUNCED**

Join your colleagues for some networking extraordinaire. The Christmas mixer is one of the networking events.

### **RESEARCH & FIELDWORK QUALITY FORUMS**

Calling for volunteers/ topics of interest all interested, please contact:

Priya on Research forum  
([Priya.Tandan@tns-global.com](mailto:Priya.Tandan@tns-global.com))

Frank on Fieldwork forum  
([joshuarc@singnet.com.sg](mailto:joshuarc@singnet.com.sg))

### **People Movement**

ACNielsen is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Soumya Saklani to the position of Director, Customized Research Services, based in Singapore.

In his new capacity, Soumya is responsible for a team that looks after the research needs of clients in the Fast Moving Consumer Goods industry.

Soumya started his career in India in 1993 and has worked with the top 2 Indian Market Research agencies – MARG (now ACNielsen India) and Indian Market Research Bureau (IMRB). He also worked in Millward Brown in Hong Kong and Singapore, and East Marketing Research (EMR)--a leading local Chinese market research agency in China where he managed their International Research division, based out of Shanghai. Soumya has also researched the Malaysian, Indonesian and Korean markets. Before joining ACNielsen, Soumya was Associate Director at Millward Brown Singapore.

Soumya is highly commended for helping clients' in solving different marketing problems and has a special interest in brand tracking, equity measurement and advertising research in the FMCG sector.

Soumya has assumed his new role as director in August 2003, reporting directly to Ms Sum Yim Ling, executive director for Customized Research Services. ♦