

'Getting deeper into the Market's Mind' Research Seminar

It is not often you get the opportunity to hear from all the major research houses in one day. This seminar, held at the InterContinental Hotel, drew around 160 people wanting to hear more about new tools and techniques. This event was sponsored by ACNielsen, Nielsen Media Research, TNS, Nielsen//NetRatings and Synovate. Blackbox, CLS, Joshua Research, Saffron Hill also supported the event which was organised by AdAsia in partnership with the Market Research Society of Singapore.



Sum Yim Ling of ACNielsen gave a presentation on the growth of self service grocery outlets and private labels. Interestingly, it seems in Australia, there is a 45% savings with private labels whereas in Asia, it averages at 10%.



Q&A session facilitated by Greg Coops (Asian Strategies).

Trevor Sharot, also from ACNielsen, explained exactly how the Peoplemetre system works and enlightened the audience on the new systems of measurement being introduced. James Burge from Nielsen//NetRatings reminded us of the changes that had come about in just a few years and showed how the Internet had changed our habits. He pointed out that the hours spent online has grown due to the spread of broadband and said currently the share of ad spend did not match the share of voice in the total media. According to Burge, in the US, the share of voice for online in the US now exceeds that of TV and radio. Robert Fry of MindShare pointed out the weaknesses in current research with regards to media while Jan Hofmeyr explained his theories on consumer commitment. Peter Snell, Chairman of Synovate, was as entertaining as usual while Corey Yeo gave the audience insights into the perfume business and samples to all the ladies who took part in the audience research questionnaire, conceived and analysed by Synovate. The most unusual topic of hypnosis and consumer research was covered by Jennifer Norris of Grey Matter Network who managed to put most of the audience into a trance.

- Article courtesy of Allein Moore, Editor of AdAsia Magazine



Left to right: Robert Fry (MindShare), Peter Snell (Synovate), Jan Hofmeyr (representing TNS), Jennifer Norris (Grey Matter Network), Corey Yeo (Symrise), James Burge (Nielsen//NetRatings) and Trevor Sharot (Nielsen Media Research).

MRSS Membership To Be Extended to University/Poly Students

In an effort to generate awareness of MRSS and to reach out to new members, MRSS will extend its membership to students.

The aim is to promote students' understanding and appreciation of the nature and value of market research; to generate interest in the research profession.

There will be a special annual membership fee of \$30, and a one-time \$10 joining fee. Benefits include special student rates for events/seminars. Student membership will cease upon graduation.

MRSS student membership will open for application starting January 2005.

Alison Koh, Membership Secretary will initiate talks with institutes of higher learning via student body (student union/ AISEC club, etc) to drive membership among students.

Volunteers to help Membership drive are needed. Those interested, please contact Alison (alison.koh@bms.com).

MRSS Research Seminars a success

The MRSS would like to express our appreciation to all those who have rendered their services and those who have supported the 2004 market research seminars. In particular, we are grateful to the speakers who had offered their time despite their busy schedule. We have had an overwhelming response to the seminars conducted between April to July at YMCA Orchard. This year, the seminars have attracted not only those working in research agencies but also research buyers from a variety of industries.

Based on previous years' experiences and feedback from past participants, we had modified the content of the seminars to include advanced level topics for both quantitative and qualitative research. In total there were 7 basic topics and 9 advanced topics. In particular, Concept/Product Testing research and Market Segmentation Research achieved the highest attendance with more than 20 people attending.

The feedback received from the attendees were encouraging, with some requesting for a second run this year. Many had given positive suggestions and in particular, attendees hoped to hear more real life examples in the future seminars. The MRSS committee is already planning for next years' seminars, taking into account all the valuable feedback received to date, and we certainly look forward to making next years' program an even better one.

- This write up is contributed by Frank Boey of Joshua Research

ACNielsen's Consumer Confidence in Asia Looking Positive Overall With Singapore the Most Encouraging of All

The Asian economy was in an unprecedented state of turmoil this time last year as a result of the outbreak of SARS across the region and globally. Consumers across the region had it tough in 2003, but have started seeing the light at the end of the tunnel beginning 2004. This uplift in consumer confidence has made itself evident not only in a general increase in economic activity in local markets but also echoed in the opinions of Asians, according to a recent ACNielsen Asia Pacific Consumer Confidence Survey.

Conducted in May 2004, the Asia Pacific Consumer Confidence Online Study surveyed 9,485 consumers in 13 Asian markets¹ to obtain a measure of consumer attitudes towards the economy and their attitudes towards a number of topical issues.

Perceptions of local economic performance over the past 6 months

According to the findings of the latest ACNielsen survey, an average of 47% of consumers across all Asian markets said they felt their country's economy had improved over the last six months, a 4% point increase since the last time we asked the same question in October 2003.

Overall, Singapore appears to be one of the most optimistic nations across the region. Ranking third behind India and Hong Kong, the 30% points hike in Singaporeans' perception that their local economy had improved in the past six months makes it the most optimistic market in Asia. In the recent survey, 67% of Singaporeans expect a recovery in the first half of 2004, as compared to the previous one where only 37% of consumers were optimistic.

Perception of local economic performance in the next 12 months

Looking ahead, a regional average of 56% of Asians felt things would improve further – a slight increase over the last survey, and fewer people feeling things would deteriorate (15% in '04 vs. 17% in '03). This continued optimism is being driven by consumers in India (85%), China (75%) and Malaysia (73%), who all expect their economic climate to improve further. Singaporeans continue to be hopeful of a bright economic outlook in the coming twelve months with confidence level rising from the previously recorded 69% to the recent high of 72%.

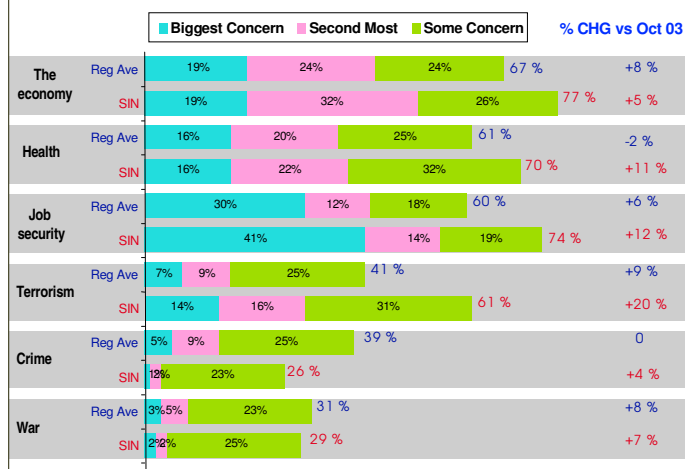
Major Concerns

Consumers still have specific concerns despite their optimism over past or future economic performance. Singaporeans displayed greatest concern for their job security with 41% of the population – the second highest in the region, having expressed that job security is their greatest concern. This is a 13% points increase since six months ago. Overall, at 75%, Singaporeans form the highest percentage of people in the region who are insecure about their jobs.

Job security, together with the economy and health, form the three issues that are topmost concerns for Singaporeans. Although less people have expressed that the economy is their greatest worry, there is still an overall increase of 5% points in Singaporeans who are still uncertain about it. Health remains amongst the top three issues. More people have expressed concerns, as seen in the registered 11% hike to 70% of the population.

"These concerns remain on people's mind given the prolonged economic uncertainty together with unexpected events in recent years," commented Mr Ashok Charan, Executive Director for ACNielsen Research Singapore. "Until a full recovery is assured and people start to personally benefit from such a recovery, consumers will find it difficult to put these concerns behind them."

Major Concerns in Asia Pacific - Regional Average vs Singapore



SYNOVATE VIEWSCAST CONFERENCE

A regional ViewsCast conference was held at Synovate in Singapore from 27th July to 30th July.

ViewsCast is a proprietary Synovate research tool that uses automated technology to collect customer feedback accurately and quickly via the telephone. For the customer it's as easy as pushing a few buttons on the telephone keypad.

It also allows clients to obtain feedback directly from customers immediately after their experience with a call centre, with a restaurant, with a retail establishment or even within the client's own organization.

Furthermore all collected data is viewable in real time!

Participants came from Synovate offices around the region to learn about the latest developments and applications of this innovative product.



The picture shows from left to right Darren Smith, the newly appointed ViewsCast Champion for Asia Pacific, Peter Snell, Chairman, Synovate Asia Pacific, and Bruce Wells, Global Synovate ViewsCast Champion.

Learnings Sharing

Marketers urged to rethink their targeting of small and medium-sized enterprises. Research reveals death of "firmographics", proposes new model of supplier marketing

Existing methods of targeting the lucrative SME sector are outmoded, wasteful and in urgent need of revision, with far-reaching implications for suppliers to this huge market.

A new, more flexible approach based on attitudinal insight can ensure that the right approach is made to the right people at the right time, minimizing the risk of losing sales.

These are the conclusions of a joint study released today by Research International and communications group Ogilvy, believed to be the first comprehensive investigation into what motivates and influences buyers within SME companies.

The sector accounts for over 99% of UK companies and creates 52% of national turnover. Respondents - a sample of 300 decision-makers in small and medium-sized businesses - were asked about their last purchase decision and their attitudes to suppliers and business in general.

Traditionally classified by turnover, industry sector and the number of people they employ (so-called "firmographics"), the survey found that SME decision-makers resent this one-size-fits-all approach, often interpreting it as evidence of a lack of respect from larger suppliers. This coupled with some concerns about basic customer service issues - lack of follow-through, tardiness and dubious truthfulness - conspire to create mistrust of large suppliers among a significant percentage of smaller firms.

By looking more closely at how these people actually think and feel about their business, the survey arrived at a new way of classifying them that enables a much more targeted approach - and a much reduced risk of alienating them.

The five key segments are as follows:

1. Dedicated advice seekers: Want personalised relationships with suppliers, need advice and don't feel they understand their business more than outsiders.
2. Impatient pragmatists: No-nonsense company people with a high involvement in purchase decisions who only want a basic relationship with their suppliers.
3. Owner/controllers: Identify strongly with the company and think of its money as their own. They need to be in control and don't necessarily trust their staff to do the best job.
4. Corner defenders: Suspicious of big business, they identify only with their particular part of the business and respect specialist knowledge.
5. Wary delegators: Have a low opinion of big business' ability to cope with small business needs. Tend to avoid a hands-on purchasing role.

Roger Sant, Development Director at Research International, comments: "SMEs can be steady and loyal customers, but they have to believe you understand them and their needs. Our research allows you to predict with 87% accuracy, which segment they fall into. Once you know the type of person you're dealing with, communicating with them becomes easier and more efficient".

Nick Baker, Senior Planner at Ogilvy, said: "Big companies dealing with SMEs are often tolerated as a 'necessary evil'. With the right strategy they could shift that position and become an 'indispensable good'. The key to earning the respect of a SME is to respect them in turn, and that means targeting them in just the right way."



the sixth sense of business™

Global Brand Forum - Singapore
16th and 17th August 2004

TNS aligns itself with the world's most influential leaders and branding experts

Promising to stimulate a rich and thought-provoking discussion on leadership issues facing some of the world's largest brands and companies, the 2nd Global Brand Forum, sponsored by TNS among others, saw a line up of iconic leaders and thinkers including the creator of their renowned Conversion Model™ consumer behaviour analysis tool, Jan Hofmeyr, who came together to offer insight into what it takes to build a great brand.



Global Brand Forum is the world's premier forum for debate, ideas and action in the areas of brands, business and leadership. It brings together the world's most inspirational and influential leaders to discuss issues and exchange ideas with the aim of changing perspectives and raising standards.

Drawing more than 1000 regional CEO and director level executives, the Global Brand Forum 2004 offered delegates the opportunity to listen to and converse with Rudy Giuliani KBE, ex-Mayor of New York City, Francis Ford Coppola, Oscar-winning Film Director and Chew Choon Seng, CEO - Singapore Airlines among others.

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NEW APPOINTMENTS FOR SYNOVATE – DARREN SMITH AND WANDA GILL

Synovate Singapore has enjoyed unprecedented growth in 2004.

The office has therefore been aggressively expanding to capitalize on such growth!

The latest additions to the Synovate team are Wanda Gill who will head up the Synovate Media Division and Darren Smith who will oversee the ViewsCast Division.

Wanda Gill has many years advertising and research experience both in Asia and North America. Her prime responsibility will be to service Media clients in Singapore and the region.

Darren Smith's telecoms background is particularly relevant for ViewsCast, a research tool which collects customer feedback accurately and in real time via the telephone.

"We believe that both Wanda and Darren will considerably enhance and broaden the range of solutions we can offer our clients. It is a clear demonstration of our commitment and belief in the Singapore market." commented Peter Snell, Chairman, Synovate Asia Pacific.



The picture shows Peter Snell welcoming Wanda and Darren Smith to the Synovate office in Singapore.

New appointments at Synovate Healthcare

LONDON (27 July 2004)

Synovate Healthcare, a specialist research division of global research company Synovate, has announced some key management appointments.

Stuart Bartlett has been named Regional Director Synovate Healthcare Asia Pacific. A graduate of Isis Research in London, Bartlett spent four years specializing in sales force effectiveness and ad-hoc research. He moved to Hong Kong in 2001 to head up the Isis representative office; two years later he joined Synovate as director of the healthcare division. He is currently based in Singapore, and for the last twelve months has been working mainly on regional healthcare projects. He is backed by a strong team of researchers both in Singapore and in the other key markets across the region.

Following the merger of Isis Research and Synovate, the newly combined Healthcare business in Asia Pacific has more than 50 full time healthcare researchers and over 154 interviewers across the region, with dedicated Healthcare teams in Singapore, China (both Shanghai and Beijing), Hong Kong, the Philippines, Japan, Malaysia, Korea, and now, from July this year, a dedicated Healthcare team in Taiwan.

TNS celebrates Annual D&D



It was a night to remember at the TNS 'Viva Las Vegas' Dinner Dance held recently at the Marriott Hotel. With glamour and glitter setting the tone for the evening, everyone was out to impress, with both the ladies and gentlemen donning their most elegant clothes perfectly complementing the feather boas and glittery top hats. Some tried their luck with a pre-dinner flutter on the blackjack and roulette tables before heading into the ballroom to partake in some serious fun and games. With many sensational prizes up for grabs, there were numerous lucky draws, prize auctions, many an energetic game and a very entertaining best dress competition providing one of the many highlights of the evening seeing TNS' very own MD strutting his stuff! And of course a night is never complete without a bit of dancing action with many taking to the floor and revealing hidden talents!