

ShoppTalk

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The Power of Marketing Research

Not that The Post's Marketing Research Department needs any more business, but at a time when the company is looking to decrease its outsourcing costs, it's important to understand the value that this vital in-house resource can provide.

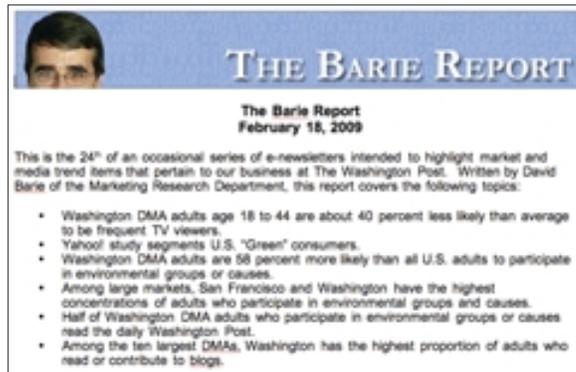
Post Media Market Research Director **Laura Evans** is quick to throw out this disclaimer: "Decisions should not be made purely based on research." But she quickly adds, "Should research be a part of the conversation and the decision-making process? Absolutely."

For example, Research is used to track company goal indicators such as the net promoter score and online traffic.

Evans, who oversees primary research at the paper and Web site, says, "One of our company goals is to maintain and, in some places, increase our net promoter score. It's a measure of loyalty. It comes down to one simple question: How likely

are you to recommend The Washington Post or washingtonpost.com to a friend or colleague? How they answer that question determines if the person is a promoter (a score of 9 or 10 out of 10), passive (a 7 or 8) or a detractor (0 to 6). So the net score is determined by subtracting the detractors from the promoters.

"A ton of research has been done to show a correlation between companies that track their net promoter score and their success," Evans continues. "By tracking the score, there's a more concerted effort to improve customer satisfaction and thereby become a more customer-oriented company. Of course, the important piece is: What's driving the net promoter score? Is it good content? Is it the paper being delivered on time? Is it having a great



Marketing Research's **Dave Barie's** internally distributed "The Barie Report" provides relevant, marketing data that he sometimes coins "myth busters." The information helps the approximately 450 recipients sell ads and make more informed business decisions.

experience when talking to customer service? You can see how this information might help a company identify where it is lagging."

Though an internal survey to measure employees' promoter score has not been conducted, Evans says it's worth exploring. The results could be used to encourage employees to be more proactive promoters of their company at a time when it behooves them to advocate and sell the products of the place that employs them.

Post Digital Marketing Intelligence and Analysis

Senior Manager **Nick Findlay** says, "One area where the online analysis group impacts the company is that we project and forecast our online and mobile traffic. We look at historical traffic, industry trends, growth rates, upcoming news events and come up with an analysis of what we believe the vol-

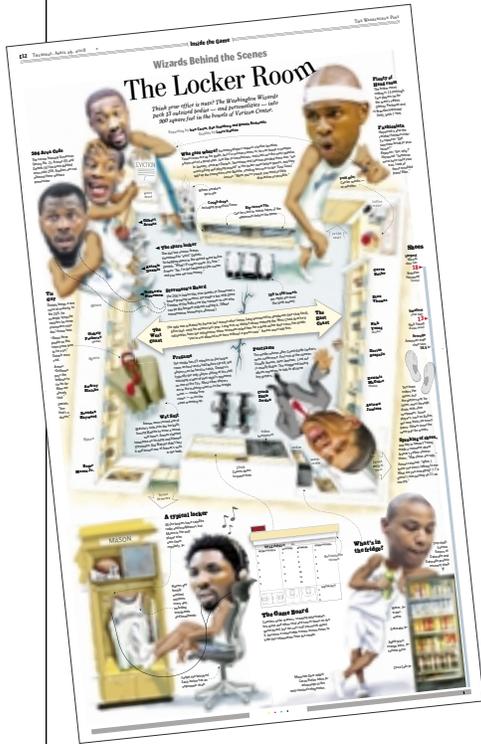
ume of traffic will be in the coming months. We establish goals around the projected traffic and track our progress against those goals. This forms the basis for many decisions, such as what we need to do to acquire and retain more readers on our sites."

Beyond feeding the decision-making process of broad strategic goals, Research also quells the hunger pangs of Advertising sales reps, News editors and others.

With over 22 years of experience, Post Media senior

Awards

Society for News Design Awards



The Post earned 17 awards during the 30th Annual Society for News Design Awards. The Post winners were selected from among 10,725 entries submitted by 346 newspapers in 43 countries. News artist **Laura Stanton** and graphic editor **Bonnie Berlowitz** earned a silver award for this design. To see all winners and their winning designs, visit: www.snd.org/competitions/contest30.lasso.

College Park Award Winners



From left, **Walter Talley** and **Bernie Sullivan** were recognized on March 4 as the College Park Plant's Outstanding People Producing Exceptional Value Award winners. The award was established five years ago to recognize employees who best represent the core values of honesty, integrity, respect, safety, customer-focus and teamwork. The awards are presented annually in conjunction with the plant's year-end results.

Post Digital Wins IAB Sales Excellence Award

On Feb. 23, Post Digital earned the Sales Excellence Award in Long Term Achievement from the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB). The IAB awards honor exceptional interactive sales organizations and individual account executives.

In a press release announcing the award, Post Digital Advertising Sales Vice President **Steve Stup** said, "The sales team

at Washington Post Digital is a group of dedicated individuals who are committed to developing and nurturing great relationships and are passionate about the brand. I've always felt our team represented the best in the industry, so to be recognized among our peers for long-term excellence is a tremendous honor."

More 2009 WHNPA "Eye of History" Winners

Video Results

General News

Third Place: Pierre Kattar

Day Feature

Award of Excellence: Akira Hakuta

Feature

First Place: Ben De La Cruz

Second Place: Alexandra Garcia

News Special Reports/

Features

First Place: Ben De La Cruz

Political

Award of Excellence: Pierre Kattar

Editing Results

Day Feature

Award of Excellence: Akira Hakuta

News Feature

Award of Excellence: Whitney Shefte

Editing Short Form

First Place: Pierre Kattar

Second Place: Alexandra Garcia

Award of Excellence: Ben De La Cruz

Editing Long Form

Second Place: Ben De La Cruz

Award of Excellence: Pierre Kattar

Presidential/Political

Third Place: Ben De La Cruz

Award of Excellence: Akira Hakuta

Research analyst **Dave Barie** says, "Our information is often used to answer specific questions asked by potential or current advertisers that want to know how we can reach their target audience against our competitors. Essentially, we help Advertising sales reps justify to advertisers why they should spend their advertising dollars on us."

One such rep is Advertising sales manager **Mark Gross**, based in San Francisco. He says, "Research is a lot more than, 'Can you do this for me or pull this together?' In the business we're in now, positioning who we are, who the market is and how we can effectively reach that target market is crucial."

Gross credits Marketing Research, particularly Evans and senior Research analysts **Kristina Meacham** and **Todd Nicolini**, with helping him bring in over a million and a half new advertising dollars in the first quarter from nationally-focused advertisers. Meacham provided "added value" by helping client Qualcomm measure the results of their massive D.C. ad campaign. Nicolini helped make Gross's case to Adobe that deep, penetrating local advertising in D.C. via The Post might prove more beneficial than advertising in a national publication. "They're my wizards behind the curtain—my 24-7 hotline," Gross says.

But what kind of data exactly helps accomplish this? Barie calls some of the infor-

mation "myth busters" and, along with other relevant data, makes it available to more than 450 people through his internally and electronically distributed "The Barie Report."

"We try to fight a lot of myths," Barie says. "There are plenty of them in advertising, that's for sure. We really try to shed some light on reality. For example, many people see things in black and white and no gray. We'll



Marketing Research's **Kristina Meacham** organized a survey to measure the success of Qualcomm's D.C. ad campaign, thereby helping Advertising sales manager **Mark Gross** provide "added value" to his client.

hear: 'Young people don't read newspapers. Nobody. Zero.' And we say, 'Well, first of all, that's not true.' About 23 percent of Millennials (age 18-29) are reading on an average weekday. Another 11 percent read online and 12 percent look at Express. That 23 percent becomes a net 34 percent, and now you have nearly a quarter of a million young people daily" (Source: Scarborough 2008, Release 2).

It is this type of counter-conventional wisdom, empirical information that leads Evans to say: "It's just not true that young people are not reading the paper, so I completely disagree with this notion that newspapers will die once the next couple of generations pass away."

Another popular myth

Barie disproves: "Nobody is from Washington." Barie says that most people tend to guess that about 5 percent of adults in the metro area are Washington, D.C., natives, when in reality the number is 34 percent, according to MORI Research.

Given this type of misinformation, it's easy to see how advertisers looking to reach young people or D.C. natives might skip out on advertising in The Post.

Besides Advertising folks, News editors at the paper and Web site are also big consumers of Marketing Research, which helps them answer two basic questions: Who is the readership today? And what content is striking a chord

with those readers?

Findlay says, "The editorial staff is always interested in knowing how our content is consumed online. We put out daily, weekly and monthly reports—what pages are most popular, what videos are most popular, what section of the site is getting what type of traffic and so forth. We track essentially everything that is consumed on the Web and mobile sites."

Evans, Findlay and Barie explain that tasking comes from almost every department at the paper and Web site. When Evans mentions Accounting as the possible exception, she stops herself cold. "No, we've done stuff with them also. We wanted to find out how subscribers reacted to a new bill we

prototyped."

It's true that Marketing Research may not be the crystal ball some hope or the end-all be-all for every decision, but trying to navigate through business decisions, editorial decisions or advertising sales pitches without it is like driving with your eyes closed. With your eyes open, you'll still need directions, you'll still need to know how to drive, but there's a good chance you won't plow into a brick wall. ■

PostScripts

PLI Class of 2008



PHOTO - EMIL ROBINSON

The Vincent E. Reed Principals Leadership Institute Class of 2008 made up by selected principals, along with the PLI Advisory Board and PLI program manager David Jones (bottom, left), Community Relations. Each year approximately 25 area principals are selected to go through the PLI training curriculum. Apart from learning new tools to enhance their effectiveness, they also have the opportunity to network with other principals and educators.

Free Identity Theft Seminar

CommonWealth One Federal Credit Union will be hosting a one-hour identity theft seminar on April 8 at noon in the Auditorium. At the seminar, Post employees will learn how people make themselves vulnerable to identity theft, valuable tips on how to protect their Social Security number, how to spot phony fishing attacks in their inboxes, how to shop safely online and what to do if they're a victim of fraud.

to volunteer for this citywide, brain-scrambling, puzzle (slash) scavenger hunt, contact **Julie Perlstein** at perlsteinjm@washpost.com or at x4-7244. This year's PostHunt ground zero will be Freedom Plaza on Pennsylvania Avenue between 13th and 14th streets. You are encouraged (really, really, really encouraged) to tell all your friends and family about the Hunt, but to come out and volunteer.

Looking for Post Hunt Volunteers

Mark your calendars. The second annual Post Hunt will take place on May 17 from noon to 5 p.m. If you missed last year's event, Post Hunt masterminds columnist Dave Barry, columnist **Gene Weingarten** and Post Magazine Editor **Tom Shroder** would probably tell you that you stink—er, feel sorry for you.

If you would like

Making Machines Run Smooth



PHOTO - BRIAN PRATT

Kenny Metzker directs light on a nearly invisible fitting for **Bob Lewis**, Mailroom Superintendent. Metzker is part of Springfield Mailroom maintenance foreman **Rob Wehrle's** small and capable team of workers who fine tune production machines. Metzker recently led a training exercise on insert hoppers since Wehrle and Metzker recently assumed responsibility for the daily inserting machines and are now taking on seven additional production lines. Noting the machine's wear, Metzker set up a comprehensive lubrication recovery plan and then trained several folks how to find, reach and lubricate all 33 points per machine. **Brian Pratt** contributed to this report.

TastePost Wine And Cheese Tasting This Tuesday

TastePost Wine and Cheese Tasting in The Post Auditorium on Tuesday, March 31, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Only \$10 for TastePost members and up to three guests can accompany members. To join

In the Green Corner

FACT: Color printing ink uses a soy oil base and waste ink is used to make additional black ink.

GREEN TIP: National Geographic's www.the-greenguide.com recommends purchasing "household items like detergent and cleaning supplies in concentrated forms so that you get more product per package."



TastePost, go to: www.tastepost.com. Membership is \$20. Be sure to tell friends and family about it. Everyone is welcome.

Note to All Post Employees

It is imperative that all Post employees contact **Monica Williams** the switchboard, x4-6000, or **Mary Robinson** at x4-7880 to ensure that your contact information is up to date. If you are new at The Post, you ABSOLUTELY need to call and provide your contact information. The information is used to reach you in an emergency, a crisis or if someone is trying to contact you from outside the building.

Marketplace

FOR RENT: Very nice, clean townhouse in Kingstowne, Alexandria. 3BR, 3.5 BA, inside laundry, plenty of storage, 2 parking spaces. One mile from Springfield/Franconia Metro station (steps to bus). Walk to shops, restaurants and movies. Access to pool in summer. Asking \$1800 a month, plus one-month deposit. Call Clover at x4-7930 or 571-251-2364.

FOR SALE: Socks! But not just any socks. These are Breast Cancer Awareness socks being sold for a young ladies' soccer team's community service fundraiser "Wildcats for the Cure." All proceeds are donated to the National Breast Cancer Foundation. Eleven styles to choose: one pair for \$6, two for \$10, three for \$15. Contact John Crispeno at x4-5438.

FOR SALE: Sharp 36-in. color TV w/PIP and remote control for \$100.00. Please contact Vincent Garrett in the Engineering Department at 202-415-4257.

FOR RENT: Vacation rental in Myrtle Beach, S.C. 2 BR (main BR with Jacuzzi), 2BA, full kitchen, sleeps 6 to 8. Located at Plantation Resort in South Myrtle Beach bordering a golf course. Very convenient to beach, shopping, golf courses, restaurants and entertainment (Broadway on the Beach). Available any week through Memorial Day weekend. \$700.00 per week. Contact Joe at 540-419-9097.

MARKETPLACE DEADLINE:

Close of business on Fridays. Please include your name, extension and phone number. Ads are for Post Media and Digital employees. E-mail ads to shoptalk@washpost.com or onam@washpost.com. Ads will run for two issues unless otherwise requested. ShopTalk reserves the right to publish and edit all ads.