

- Data is (63%) over data are (44%)

(More from www.writingthatworks.com/survey/results/php. Includes comments by respondents.)

FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS CONFUSE CONSUMERS ABOUT THEIR "OPT - OUT" RIGHT

Financial institutions have until July 1 to inform customers of their right to remove their names from data-sharing programs. The Financial Modernization Act of 1999 (also known as the Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act) extended the ability of banks, securities firms and insurance companies to enter each other's businesses and to share information.

This law has consequently led to a flood of complaints by consumers and raised concerns by several privacy advocates and consumer groups. A 23-page position paper by EPIC, the Privacy Rights Clearing House, US PIRG and Consumers Union points out that when combined, customer databases from giant entities contain "a vast amount of financial, medical and other sensitive information." Writing for *Wired Digital*, Joanna Glasner summarizes a variety of views and surveys on the subject.

"There's quite a bit of awareness that greater clarity is necessary for the consumer," states Susan Hart, a financial economist at the U.S. Treasury. An American Bankers Association survey found that 41% of people never even recalled getting an opt-out notice, some mistaking the forms for mere junk mail. A coalition of 37 state attorneys general is pushing the federal government to require that notices be couched in simpler language.

ITEMS OF INTEREST TO PROFESSIONALS

¶ **Internet-Based Research Seen As Helpful Tool.** Organizations can afford to conduct surveys that were not feasible in the past, says Opinion Dynamics Corp. "Its advantages, such as low cost and quick turnaround can be coupled with good samples and high response rates." One useful application is internal employee interviewing. ODC recently conducted employee surveys regarding specific departments within an organization as well as attitudes toward the organization as a whole. At many large organizations, employees have e-mail addresses, making it easy to access any subgroup of the employee population. On the confidentiality issue, however, ODC optimistically assumes that most employees feel free to express their opinions without fear of repercussions. (More from Lawrence Shiman at lshiman@opiniondynamics.com)

¶ **"The future of an organization depends upon:** a) how the people that were laid off were treated; b) how those that stayed were treated (so they are positive, motivated and willing to remain), and c) how a good balance is achieved between the needs of the business and its people. As basic as this is, I think these are some of the most difficult organizational and communications goals to achieve," writes Judith Cushman in the May/June *Cushman Report* (www.jc-a.com).

WHO'S WHO IN PUBLIC RELATIONS

DIED. Stephen Pisinski (pres, Montgomery Group, San Francisco) unexpectedly. He was 2000 PRSA chair and CEO, 2002 Chair of

PRSA's Nominating Committee and a dedicated and supportive leader of PRSA.



A RESPECTFUL APPROACH TO SOLVING PROBLEMS AND ACHIEVING BEHAVIOR CHANGE

Sometimes the answer to a problem is right in front of us. The challenge is to recognize it as an answer, explains Jerry Sternin (a visiting scholar at Tufts Univ and assistant dean, Harvard Business School) in his keynote address at the Corporate Citizenship Conference. During his 16 years working with Save the Children, he developed his **model of positive deviancy** (PD) – an approach that opens our eyes to solutions that already exist but are so close we fail to see them, explains *Corporate Citizenship Review*.

PD looks for the departure, difference or deviation from the norm that is resulting in a positive outcome. In every community there are those who outperform or find better solutions to problems despite having the same resources as others within the community. PD identifies these practices and makes them accessible to the community.

It's "an extremely **respectful approach**," notes Sternin because it focuses not on how a community or an organization is failing, but on where it is succeeding. The model is effective for behavioral or social change. It tends to **result in lasting change because solutions are not imposed from the outside but are identified from the local community and shared with neighbors as a strategy for action.**

THE POSITIVE DEVIANCY MODEL

It's essential that 1) you be, or partner with someone who is, local to the community where the problem exists. The community's trust is an essential ingredient. And 2) the community recognizes and acknowledges the problem or behavior that needs to change. Following are the **6 steps of Sternin's Positive Deviancy Model:**

1. **Define** the problem, perceived causes and related community behavioral norms. What would a solution or outcome look like?
2. **Determine** if anyone within the community already exhibits desired behavior or status.
3. **Discover** the unique practices and behaviors that enable positive deviants to outperform and find better solutions to problems than others in their community – a critical step of the process.

PD MODEL USED TO EASE CHILDHOOD MALNUTRITION

In 1991, Sternin sought to ease malnutrition among children in Vietnam. He enlisted local villagers to weigh and measure the children. Doing so, they found some who were well nourished despite poverty. These families, they discovered, ate protein-rich tiny shrimp, crabs and greens scooped from the rice paddies. **They were the positive deviants.**

Sternin didn't teach new ideas to families but encouraged the habit of eating these protein-rich foods. **"It's easier to act your way into a new way of thinking than to think your way into a new way of acting,"** explains Sternin.



4. **Design** and implement intervention that enables others in the community to access and practice these new behaviors. Focus on “doing” rather than the transfer of knowledge, because people are more likely to develop new behaviors they actually experience.
5. **Discern** the effectiveness of the intervention by conducting ongoing monitoring and evaluation.
6. **Disseminate.** Make the intervention accessible to a wider constituency through replication and scaling up. After discovering the positive deviants in the first Vietnamese village, Sternin conducted inquiries in other villages and found each one had its own positive deviants who used similar approaches, which could be applied locally.

(More info from The Center for Corporate Citizenship at Boston College, Wallace E. Carroll School of Management, 55 Lee Road, Chestnut Hill, MA 02467; 617/552-4545; e-mail, ccc@bc.edu)

HOW TO IMPROVE GLOBAL MARKETING RESEARCH

When corporations decide to become global organizations, international marketing research is usually the farthest thought from management’s mind. **Many noteworthy business failures can be attributed to this factor** – all of which could have been prevented with a minimal amount of research. Tim Davis (professor, Cleveland State Univ) and Robert Young (director of market research, Stores Division of ICI Paints/Glidden, Cleveland) explore the implications of differences among the cultures of the world when conducting research abroad.

The **need for cultural sensitivity** is illustrated in errors of translation encountered by marketing people. For example, when Clairol introduced a curling iron in Germany called the “Mist Stick,” it didn’t realize that “mist” is German slang for “manure.” Because of these complications, costs of research in foreign countries are likely to be higher and completion times longer. By following some guidelines these difficulties can be minimized:

A REFRESHER ON THE 4 PS (WITH AN INTERNATIONAL LENS)

Essentially, a corporation’s failure in the foreign marketplace can be traced back to management’s lack of understanding regarding “the Four Ps in the

marketing mix” – Product, Price, Place and Promotion. **The Four Ps must be 1) thoroughly investigated for every country in which you are marketing products and 2) adjusted accordingly.**

- **Product & Packaging** – Many products fail due to their lack of acceptability in the global marketplace. Product image problems can arise, causing societies to reject these products. The need that created the product in the US may not exist elsewhere.
- **Price** – More research needs to be conducted on products or services in global markets. More has to be done than merely convert the product’s price into the local currency. This may not accurately portray what consumers are willing to pay for the product.
- **Place** – Potentially the most important business decision made by the expanding corporation lies in where and how they place or distribute their products. Understanding the local culture through research helps avoid missteps in placement.
- **Promotion** – As promotional methods vary, lack of understanding in the branding, selling, advertising and promotional practices in different countries may also cause issues.

WAYS TO IMPROVE GLOBAL RESEARCH

- **Look for ways to cut costs**, e.g., making extensive use of secondary sources and data from government agencies, such as the Export Market Information Center in the UK and the International Trade Administration, a division of the Dep’t of Commerce, in the US.
- **Appoint a single market research coordinator for major studies.**
- **Pay close attention to translation of questionnaires**, e.g., IBM uses only two translation firms to reduce inconsistency in terms. Have strict formalized guidelines to govern the preparation and translation of questionnaires. This can help reduce the risk of error simply by lowering the potential for different interpretations of terms.
- **Develop a core set of questions to enhance comparability across countries**, e.g., Carrier Corp. uses 25 questions and allows subsidiaries to add an additional 5 questions.
- **Use alternative data collection methods**, e.g., more qualitative methods may have to be used in developing countries. Cultural differences may create problems, such as getting participants in a focus group to show up on time and preventing everybody from talking at the same time.

There are several additional methods to be considered and applied as well. These vary from recruiting native language interviewers and moderators and selecting lead countries as a starting point, to encouraging broad participation by those who must use the findings and keeping a close watch on the Net.

Because US firms have not conducted much of their business overseas due to the munificence of the US market, there are few American managers who are savvy about international business. Managers must be educated about the differences between global markets and how to effectively research them. (For more information see “International Marketing Research: A Management Briefing,” in *Business Horizons*, March-April 2002.)

LANGUAGE SURVEY REVEALS POPULAR USAGE OF TERMS

Survey’s 633 self-selected respondents (writers and editors from US & Canada) shows a leaning toward the traditional: **E-mail** (67%) won over **email** (33%); **Web site** (44%) over **website** (39%) or **web site** (17%). These findings are from the 11th annual usage survey by *Writing That Works* (newsletter published by Communications Concepts, Springfield, VA). Other findings:

- Computer **mouses** (59%) over **mice** (41%)
- None of the questions elicited consensus, but the great majority (83%) agreed writers can drop **http://** when giving Web addresses in print publications.
- **Home page** (66%) over **homepage** (34%)
- **Who** or **whom**? **Whom** do you want to represent you? (59%) vs. **Who** do you want to represent you? (41%). This is a comeback for **whom**, a word many thought was disappearing from the language. In 1993, 49% preferred the grammatically correct objective case.
- **Media is** (56%) over **media are** (44%)