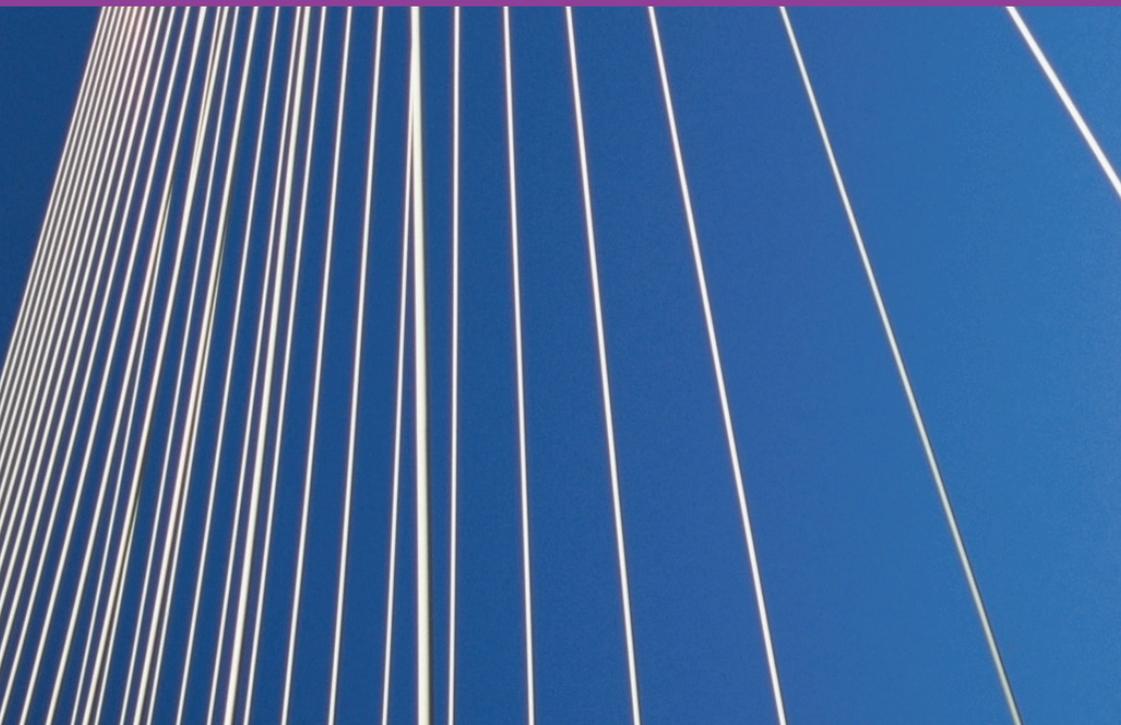




Strengthening the Framework
Annual Review 2005-06



About MRS

Officers 2005-06

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Vice President

Jennie Beck

Council

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Eamonn Santry

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Alan Wilson

With members in more than 70 countries, MRS is the world's largest association representing providers and users of market, social, and opinion research, and business intelligence.

MRS serves both individuals and organisations who identify with its core values of professionalism, excellence, and effectiveness.

It has a diverse membership of individual researchers within agencies, independent consultancies, client-side organisations, the public sector and the academic community – at all levels of seniority and in all job functions.

MRS Company Partners include agencies, suppliers, and buyers of all types and sizes who are committed throughout their organisations to supporting the core MRS values.

All individual members and Company Partners agree to self-regulatory compliance with the MRS *Code of Conduct*. Extensive advice to support this commitment is provided by MRS through its Codeline service and by publication of a wide range of specialist guidelines on best practice.

MRS offers various qualifications and membership grades, as well as training and professional development resources to support them. It is the official awarding body in the UK for professional qualifications in market research.

MRS is a major supplier of publications and information services, conferences and seminars, and many other meeting and networking opportunities for researchers.

MRS is 'the voice of the profession' in its media relations and public affairs activities on behalf of professional research practitioners, and aims to achieve the most favourable climate of opinion and legislative environment for research.

Lists of those serving on MRS Advisory Boards and Task Forces are available on the MRS website (www.mrs.org.uk).

Towards a Single Voice - President's Message

There's a fairly yucky parable that you've almost certainly come across but may sensibly have chosen to forget.

A traveller encounters three stonemasons at work on some scaffolding. Curious, the traveller asks the first stonemason what he's doing and the stonemason replies, "I'm earning my living." Apparently unsatisfied, the nosey traveller puts the same question to the second stonemason. "I'm making a wall," he replies.

The traveller persists (if only for the sake of the parable) and puts the identical question to the third stonemason: "What are you doing?"

And the third stonemason, with ineffable smugness, replies, "I'm building a cathedral."

As I get to be a little more familiar with the research industry, this story returns to me. Like many service industries, it's extremely fragmented. I expect MRS knows exactly how many market research companies there are in the UK alone but we all know that it's well in excess of lots. And one of the inevitable characteristics of a thoroughly fragmented and intensely competitive sector is that no single company ever puts the generic case for their common activity.

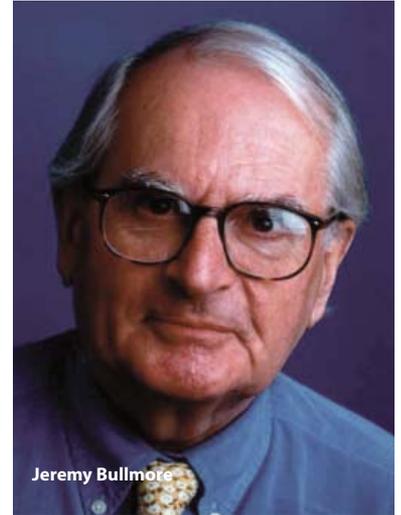
Take the advertising business. For an advertiser, by far the most important decision is the one to advertise in the first place. While it's certainly true that how you advertise can make an enormous difference to the benefit you gain, the fact remains: the decision to advertise at all is the key decision. But for very good reasons,

no single agency is going to make this point. Every agency will take the act of advertising for granted and seek to persuade potential clients of its unique ability to make the money go further. The generic case is never put.

For equally good reasons, no single research organisation is going to dwell on the critical importance of good research, diligently done. Most researchers and companies are too busy earning their own livings or building their own walls to see themselves as modest contributors to the ultimate cathedral. The generic case is never put.

And yet, when you come to think about it (as increasingly I do) the significance of research in its entirety is both vast and slightly scary. No major decision is made, political, legal, financial or commercial, that is not in part based on the analysis and interpretation of data.

I make this obvious if neglected point not to infuse research practitioners with an exaggerated sense of self-importance (though some proportionate pride is certainly justified) but more to remind ourselves of why we need to be very good indeed at what we do. Though we may think of ourselves as simply earning a living or building a wall, whether we like it or not, we're contributing to something infinitely bigger. Absolutely no one remains unaffected by what we do. If we get things wrong, the implications are immeasurable. And that, of course, is one good reason for the existence of MRS - and why we all need to be constantly fierce in our commitment to rigour and professional integrity.



"The significance of research is both vast and slightly scary. We all need to be constantly fierce in our commitment to rigour and professional integrity!"

Jeremy Bullmore

Chairman's Response



Eamonn Santry

“MRS has shown it is willing to be the single voice for the market research industry.”

Eamonn Santry

One of the key purposes of a professional body such as MRS is the protection and promotion of our craft in the wider world. In terms of self-regulation, the Society can hold itself as something of a beacon of excellence with a relevant *Code* and updated investigation and disciplinary procedures. However, seeking to tackle response rates and the issue of promotion of market research has frequently brought the Society up against the tectonic plates of ‘trade’ versus ‘professional’ issues.

The Society has historically been wary of its being seen to go beyond its franchise. Yet, talking to members, it strikes me that few seem to care very much **who** tackles these issues, as long as **somebody** does.

Discussions with the BMRA and AURA had been ongoing for many years but the lack of a clear resolution to them was causing something of an impasse strategically for MRS. The Society put in place a mechanism to communicate with corporate entities (as opposed to individuals) through its Company Partner Service. Judging by the initial uptake, this appeared to be a popular move.

Soon after, MRS Council supported a policy to show that it was prepared to be the **single voice for the market research industry** as a signal of commitment to take on some of the issues which historically fell between trade and professional bodies. Thankfully - and I should mention my gratitude to the BMRA working group for its efforts to produce the outcome - it was agreed that BMRA services should be integrated into MRS.

With Council's blessing, the Society also embarked on some research to firstly evaluate the perceptions amongst MRS members of falling response rates (with predictions for the future) before establishing

some possible actions to reverse or at least slow the increasing number of people who refuse to take part in research activities. It may be that some effective communication about how research works might help make more people inclined to take part. But we have to be realistic and our ambitions kept within the reality of modest funds.

So, advocacy for research is back on the agenda. It will be for Simon Lidington, our new Chairman, to take the matter forward and I wish him every success with it.

It's not entirely healthy for a professional body – after using conventional electoral procedures – to find itself without a Chairman. I'm delighted that this year saw a resumption of contested elections for both Chairman and Council positions.

Beyond public advocacy, Council needs to continue to focus on member interactions to maintain the franchise of the Society with the members it serves, offering them the best value services possible. During the course of my tenure, I was impressed with the professionalism within the Secretariat. These days, a volunteer army of members is no longer available on the scale it once was and so it becomes ever more important that budgetary control and operational quality match the expectations set by Council, as representatives of the membership.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jeremy Bullmore for his wise counsel (we are so fortunate to have him as our President), a hardworking and supportive Council for not giving me a difficult time and to the Secretariat for getting me up to speed on the key issues. I also offer Simon Lidington my best wishes for what will I think be a very interesting term as Chairman.

Internal Work - Director General's Overview

Much of the last year has been devoted to implementation and completion of three major projects started in 2004–05, plus initiation of three more with significant advantage for 2006–07 and beyond.

The new MRS Constitution, which attracted overwhelming support from members at the EGM in March 2005, came into force. It included a streamlined membership structure, and much improved governance. Two new 'statutory' Boards were created: (a) the Management Board (formerly the Executive Committee) to address a wide range of policy, financial, and operational issues in more detail than is possible at Council; and (b) the Market Research Standards Board (formerly the Professional Standards Committee) with a wider remit to cover all standards, and the compliance work which now encompasses organisations as well as individuals.

The new MRS Code of Conduct was published. It incorporates much greater clarity of expression and meaning, which is essential for guiding best practice and for enforcement. It also consolidates all mandatory requirements, some of which had previously been scattered in specialist guidelines. The new *Code* also reflects industry practice to a much greater extent, and the signs are that the ICC/ESOMAR Code will follow the MRS lead in its own revision. Above all, the *Code* (like the Constitution) is fit for purpose in the 21st century.

The new MRS Company Partner Service was launched in April 2005, and attracted 84 participating organisations in its first year. In addition to the long-established MRS role of serving individuals, **companies** were offered an MRS framework for the first time. This enabled them to demonstrate commitment **throughout their**

organisation to industry standards, and to compliance with self-regulation based on the new MRS *Code of Conduct*. MRS Company Partners are also demonstrating their contribution to the external representation of the mainstream market research industry. In return they receive packages of services at very advantageous prices, including representation on a wide range of business and commercial issues.

The new single industry body came into being in April 2006, following detailed discussion with BMRA which led to a decision to integrate BMRA services into MRS. The MRS Company Partner Service provided a ready-made framework for delivery of these services. It is also intended to develop a parallel framework to enable client-side organisations to become MRS Company Partners.

Purchase of the 4th floor of 15 Northburgh Street was completed in February 2006, and work commenced to convert it into a training suite and meeting rooms to accommodate courses, seminars, small conferences, meetings of Council and Advisory Boards, networking events, and other large meetings previously held off-site.

More proactive advocacy of the value and impact of research has been identified as a major priority for next year's work. MRS has always had the dual and complementary roles of protecting and promoting research. It is Council's view that, albeit with very limited resource, future effort should incline to a greater extent towards promotion and advocacy.

Moreover, the incoming Chairman, Simon Lidington, has indicated the desirability of developing an all-embracing medium-term outlook and strategy for MRS. It is Council's intention to focus on this issue during 2006-07.



David Barr

“More proactive advocacy of the value and impact of research had been identified as a major priority.”

David Barr

Standards: The 3Ps

“MRS has always been an effective regulator for individual practitioners. With the revision to the Code and the introduction of corporate compliance via the Company Partner Service, MRS has strengthened self-regulation to the benefit of the public, clients, suppliers and legislators.”

Rowland Lloyd (Ipsos MORI), Chairman of the MRS Market Research Standards Board

1. PROFESSION

The MRS *Code of Conduct*, its associated guidelines and disciplinary procedures remain at the core of MRS activities. Under the direction of the MRS Market Research Standards Board (MRSB) much work has been undertaken to ensure that they remain up to date and consistent with increasing legislative requirements which affect members' activities. MRSB's membership, its agenda for the coming year and its report on activities during 2005-06 are available online at www.mrs.org.uk/standards/mrsb.htm.

New Code of Conduct

The new MRS *Code of Conduct* became binding from 1 December 2005. It was extensively updated

and now includes all the mandatory rules previously dispersed across the suite of MRS guidelines together with some legislative requirements. The new *Code* was issued following a three-month consultation with MRS members who were all sent a draft copy and given access to presentation sessions; an excellent response was achieved with over 300 contributions. Supporting materials prepared for members when the new *Code* was issued included a PowerPoint training presentation and a document highlighting the key differences between the 2005 *Code* and the 1999 version.

Updated guidelines

Following this all MRS guidelines had to be updated to ensure consistency with the new *Code*. Revised guidelines on conducting research with children and young people, employee research and internet research were issued during 2005-06. During the next year, the remaining guidelines on business to business research, qualitative research (including observation), questionnaire design, public opinion research and mystery shopping will be revised.

In February and March 2006 two new legislative documents were issued: *Regulations for Use of Predictive Diallers*, to advise members on appropriate technical measures

to avoid creating silent calls, and guidance on the implications of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

MRS continued to liaise with appropriate partners on standards and, in October 2005, it produced data protection guidance specifically for social research jointly with the Social Research Association. Further regulations relating to data protection and using market research techniques for non-market research purposes will be released in 2006-07.

FAQs and Research Clinic

During February and March 2006, the FAQs sections of the website were expanded and updated to ensure consistency with the new *Code*. A Research Clinic was also launched online and in *MRS News*.

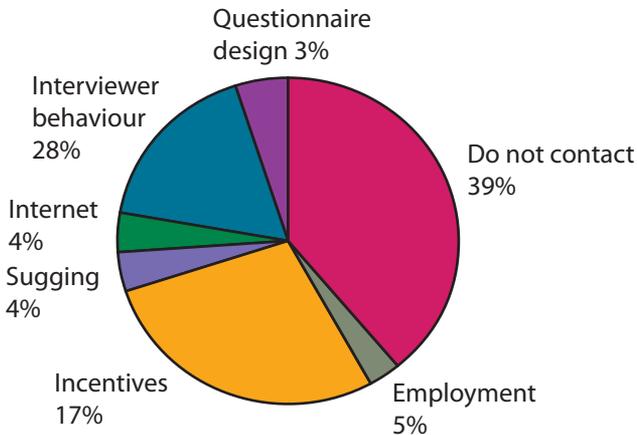
2. PROCESS

Over the last five years, MRS has seen a steady and significant increase in the number of complaints against members. Many of these relate to organisational process failures rather than individuals breaching the *Code*. The need to address this disparity was one of the key drivers for the development of the MRS Company Partner Service. MRSB monitors the full range of issues and will continue to offer guidance

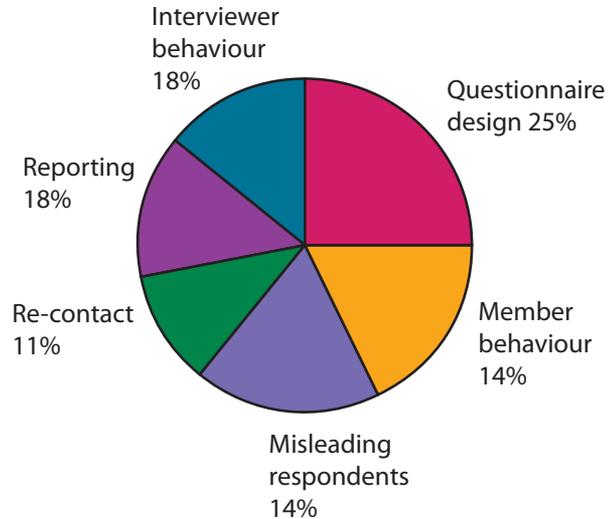
Complaints received

	2005-06	2004-05
Disciplinary cases		
Upheld	2	0
Not upheld	25	14
Ongoing	7	6
Total disciplinary cases	34	20
Minor complaints resolved by the Secretariat	76	54
Total complaints received	110	74

Minor complaints handled by Secretariat in 2005-06 (n = 76)



Disciplinary cases completed in 2005-06 (n = 28)



to support members and Company Partners, helping them to avoid problems and thereby strengthening self-regulation.

Company Partner Quality Commitment (CPQC)

The CPQC underpins the Company Partner Service and requires all MRS Company Partners to:

- have adequate process standards
- invest in the professional development of staff
- have robust employee contracts/terms of employment which include a commitment to the MRS Code of Conduct
- meet the same level of commitment to the Code
- have robust procedures for disciplining field staff (if appropriate)
- use IID cards and Thank You leaflets (if appropriate)
- adequately train interviewers (if appropriate).

Dual disciplinary approach

Supporting the CPQC is the Company Partner Complaint Procedure. This rigorous and

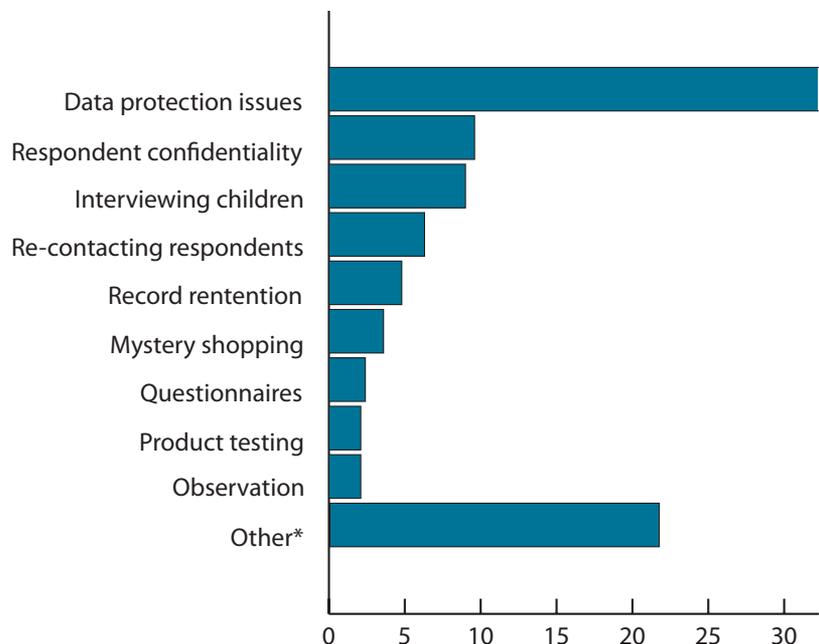
transparent mechanism regulates against all of the requirements of the CPQC. Thus Company Partners are not only regulated against the Code but also their processes, training and field provisions are all subject to regulation. This procedure does not replace the MRS Disciplinary Regulations: they continue to sit

alongside it. Depending on the case, one or both procedures may be applied in the investigation of a complaint.

Extending advisory services

With the introduction of the Company Partner Service, the MRS Codeline was expanded to encompass guidance on process

Codeline queries 2005-06 (n = 332)



*Other includes enquiry types less than 2%

% of total calls

“The priority for MRS is to gain greater industry involvement in professional development of research’s greatest asset, its people. The Society is achieving this in a number of ways including promoting the value of qualifications to the sector, identifying emerging needs and adapting its training programme accordingly.”

Professor Alan Wilson (University of Strathclyde), Chairman of the MRS Professional Development Advisory Board

issues (such as ISO 20252, BS 7911 and IQCS) and all the requirements of the CPQC. The Croner Business Advisory Service has been retained to assist Company Partners with specific business issues (eg tax, health and safety etc).

ISO

MRS is one of the stakeholders in the Market Research Quality Standards Association (MRQSA) which has been responsible for the development of the British Standard for market research, BS 7911. During 2005-06 MRS contributed to the development of a new International Standard for market research, ISO 20252, to be launched in May 2006 and to replace BS 7911 from 2008.

3. PEOPLE

During 2005-06, MRS concentrated on enhancing accessibility of professional development opportunities for researchers under the guidance of the MRS Professional Development Advisory Board.

Qualifications

New courses supporting MRS qualifications were launched. There are now four accredited centres offering the new Masters-level MRS Diploma in Market & Social Research Practice: Kingston University, University of Westminster, BPP (distance learning provider) and Ipsos MORI.

New part-time courses were offered by learningpower and Cambridge Marketing College for the MRS Advanced Certificate in Market & Social Research Practice. Over 1,000 people now hold this qualification which continued to attract a growing number of candidates, 25% of whom were from client companies and the public sector.

The MRS/City & Guilds Certificate was launched as a fully online

qualification: candidates can study via the online training programme and all of them take the multiple-choice examination online.

A Masters degree in Market Research by Learning Contract, offered by Kingston University, was accredited by MRS. This allows candidates to study for a Masters in the workplace. MRS Diploma holders are awarded 120 credits towards this 180-credit qualification.

Training

Over 1,000 delegates attended MRS training courses, a 16% increase on 2004-05. MRS also expanded its training outside the UK with in-company courses in Thailand and The Netherlands. There was a substantial focus on the revision of long-standing courses to address the growing call for increased business awareness among research executives. In particular, the syllabus and content of the MRS Summer School was redeveloped during early 2006 for re-launch as *Research in Action*. Preparations also began in early 2006 for the integration of courses previously offered by BMRA into the MRS training programme.

Advisory service

In 2005-06, MRS introduced an expanded Professional Development Advisory Service for members and Company Partners interested in receiving advice on training and qualifications programmes.

Occupational standards

MRS continued its participation in the Marketing & Sales Standards Setting Body to develop the National Occupational Standards for marketing communications. The new standards, together with a functional map which describes the key dimensions of the profession, became available from March 2006 and are due to be formally launched in September 2006.

MRS Company Partner Service

Launch

The MRS Company Partner Service (CPS) was launched in April 2005 and 84 organisations participated within the first year. These comprised large and small agencies, consultancies, field and data processing companies, viewing facilities, and one client company. The aim of the CPS is to deliver cost effective support enabling organisations to develop their people and processes, and meet their commitment to research standards. MRS Company Partners endorse and support the core MRS brand values of professionalism, research excellence and business effectiveness. By signing up to the MRS Company Partner Quality Commitment (see p7), they commit to compliance with the MRS *Code of Conduct* throughout the organisation. The focus is on professional and industry standards, self-regulation and professional development.

A small team of Account Managers was established to:

- develop appropriate service packages for different types of organisations and to facilitate some customisation;
- recruit organisations to participate in the CPS;
- ensure that MRS Company Partners take full advantage of their benefits.

Once the CPS was successfully launched it became imperative to establish good communications: first between MRS and the Company Partners (and their employees); and second, externally to promote those organisations which had become MRS Company Partners. The former was achieved using a range of media: e-mails, e-newsletters, manuals, CDs, briefings and online resources. These were used to highlight the benefits and services available to MRS Company Partners

and to encourage their staff to make use of them. An online register of MRS Company Partners and a series of advertisements in the trade press and directories publicised the CPS and the participating organisations which had signalled their commitment to standards.

Integration of BMRA services

In late February 2006, BMRA members voted in favour of integrating BMRA services into the CPS. Prior to this, two teams from MRS and BMRA had drawn up the proposal for integration. The rationale behind the proposal, which was unanimously endorsed by the respective Councils, was that a single strong association is better for the research sector than fragmentation. Integration would provide one effective voice for research in external communications and representation, consistent policies on industry standards and other issues, wider participation and better value for money.

In March 2006, BMRA member companies were invited to attend a briefing at the Research 2006 conference which outlined how a smooth transition would be effected. Special service packages were developed for the smallest BMRA members to support them in the transfer. Streamlined procedures were also created to assist them with access to the CPS while ensuring that the standards set by the eligibility criteria were maintained. At the same time, MRS started to absorb BMRA services in areas such as international representation, training, conference, awards, special interest groups, and industry statistics from 1 April 2006. The schedule for rolling out these additional services will be dependent on the level of participation in the CPS by former BMRA members.

“One of the few disadvantages of being a medium sized agency is that we don’t have the same resources that the biggest agencies enjoy. The MRS Company Partner Service helps us overcome this. A great benefit is that it enables us to get the maximum value for our learning and development investment.”

Tony Keen (ESA Market Research), Chairman of the MRS Company Partner Service Advisory Board



Communications

“MRS is providing the right services and communicating via all the right channels. However, the challenge it faces is to develop a core message or proposition to succinctly describe the purpose of MRS in an appealing and motivating manner.”

Geoff Gosling (Synovate),
MRS Council Member

Re-branding

In 2004-05, there was a move to establish clearly differentiated identities for the two brands, MRS and Research. The re-positioning and redesign of Research had been undertaken in late 2004 and MRS launched its new marque and house style in April 2005. During the year, MRS published materials were redesigned to create a distinctive look and feel. This was underpinned by broader promotion to build the organisation's new image and signal its core brand values of professionalism, research excellence and business effectiveness.

Membership

During summer 2005, MRS undertook a thorough overhaul of membership communications, evaluating services provided and communication channels used. Benchmarking both against comparable organisations indicated MRS was using the appropriate communications media and offering the full range of services expected of a professional association of its type and size. However, there appeared to be a perception in some quarters that MRS was not providing all of these services, and the need to communicate more effectively about them was recognised. A communications plan was developed for immediate implementation. Printed materials and the website were updated with the new house style providing a consistent visual image. The introduction of new membership welcome packs, annual membership cards, a print and online Research Clinic, 'Did you know' teasers in *MRS News* and activity-specific e-newsletters were used to remind members of the services available to them. Work will continue in this area during 2006-07.

LitSearch and Research Portal

Following a Council review, the work of the Library and Information Service was re-focused. *LitSearch*, the MRS literature sourcing service, was launched to help members and employees of MRS Company Partners identify and find relevant research literature via tailored literature searches. This is supported by the *LitSearch* collection of books, journals and magazines. The web-based MRS Research Portal was also launched to facilitate self-service literature searches and provide access to information sources for desk research.

Networking

As part of its inclusivity agenda, Council sought to establish whether MRS was reaching all of its potential audiences and providing services that would be of value to them. Initially, it concentrated on regions, special interest groups, operations staff (including field and data processing), and organisations. Council concluded that:

- There were good formal networking opportunities with groups and regions which were member-led and needs-driven. However, it was important to promote the support and guidance available to members wishing to form new networks.
- Links with the Association for Survey Computing and integration of BMRA special interest groups would offer further opportunities for data processing and field staff in 2006-07.
- Council decided to conduct research amongst field members in 2006-07.
- Organisations gained value via access to the MRS Company Partner Service.

Public affairs

MRS continued to lead representation for market and social research on a wide range of legislative issues:

- MRS responded to the **Department of Trade and Industry** (DTI) consultation on implementing the EU Directive on Unfair Commercial Practices, requesting that selling and fundraising under the guise of market research be included within the scope of prohibited unfair commercial practices.
- MRS released new *Regulations for Use of Predictive Diallers*, following its initial submission and subsequent meetings with **Ofcom** about the revised Statement of Policy on the persistent misuse of an electronic communications network or electronic communications service.
- MRS attended **DTI** Stakeholder meetings to discuss the implications of the EU Services Directive.
- In 2004 the **Cabinet Office** had asked MRS to comment on guidelines for social research. In 2005 the revised document, which included nearly all representations made by MRS, was submitted for further consultation.
- MRS liaised with the **Department of Health** regarding the application of the Research Governance Framework and received approval of the FAQs it had drafted on the subject.
- The **Department for Education & Skills** conducted a consultation on sharing information about children. The MRS response suggested possible arrangements for data sharing for research purposes which had been omitted.

- MRS responded to various **Qualifications & Curriculum Authority** consultations which have an impact on its Awarding Body status including the Review for the Proposed Changes to the Regulatory Framework and the Framework for Achievement.

- The Census and Geodemographics Group issued a report to the **Office of National Statistics** on the successes and failures of the 2001 Census, the content of the 2011 Census and the Continuous Population Survey, and sent a detailed letter to the former **Office of the Deputy Prime Minister** regarding the fees charged for Ordnance Survey royalties.

Media relations

The MRS Press Office, run by Camargue, receives about 250 calls each year and is an indispensable source of information for journalists. A panel of authoritative industry spokespeople works with MRS to answer journalists' queries and to support proactive campaigns to secure features in the trade and national media (see panel). Council initiated a review of its future role in advocacy of the value of research and agreed this should be a priority for 2006-07.

“There is no point in forcing networks. The most successful are those that are member-led and MRS-facilitated. Looking to the future, MRS needs to focus its efforts on filling the gaps in its existing portfolio of networks.”

Nikki Bell (FMR Research),
MRS Council Member

Press coverage

In 2005-06, positive news coverage and features for market research and MRS were secured in:

National and trade media:

- *Admap*
- *Brand Strategy*
- *Marketing*
- *Marketing Research*
- *Marketing Week*
- *PR Week*
- *Radio 4 (Today Programme)*
- *The Independent*
- *The Marketer*
- *The Stage*

Online publications:

- *BMRA Business*
- *Brandrepublic.com*
- *Daily Research News*
- *Marketing Blog*
- *Market Research News*
- *mrbusiness.co.uk*
- *mrweb.com*
- *Outright*
- *Research-live.com*
- *World Opinion News*

Highlights of the Year

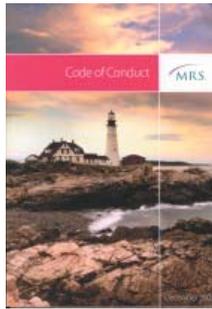
Corporate

- The new MRS Constitution was implemented including improved governance with the formation of the Management Board and the Market Research Standards Board.
- The 'Way Ahead' discussions were completed, resulting in BMRA members voting in favour of integrating BMRA services within the MRS Company Partner Service.
- The 4th floor of 15 Northburgh Street was purchased to provide a suite of training and meeting rooms to accommodate events previously held off-site.
- Council identified proactive advocacy of the value of research as a priority for 2006-07.
- Work continued on clearly differentiating the MRS and Research brands including broader promotion to build the organisation's reputation and signal its core brand values of professionalism, research excellence and business effectiveness.
- MRS reserves were further strengthened by over £60K.

Standards, policy and representation

- The new MRS *Code of Conduct* was issued and became binding on 1 December 2005.
- Three existing MRS guidelines were updated.
- New regulations on the use of predictive diallers were issued.
- New guidelines on the Freedom of Information Act 2000 were issued.
- Joint guidance on data protection for social research was published in conjunction with the Social Research Association.

- MRS continued to contribute to the development of a new International Standard for market research (ISO 20252).



- The standards section of the MRS website was updated to expand the range of FAQs and introduce new pages on complaints (and how to avoid them).
- A Research Clinic was launched online and in print.
- Compliance was strengthened via the introduction of the MRS Company Partner Service and its associated complaints procedure which makes whole research organisations subject to disciplinary action in addition to individual MRS members.
- Participation in standards schemes remained strong: over 111 organisations subscribed to the Interviewer Identity (IID) Card Scheme; over 75,000 IID cards were issued; and 15,917 calls (16% more than 2004-05) were received by the UK Freephone service.
- Discussions continued with the Cabinet Office, the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Department of Constitutional Affairs regarding on-going issues such as data protection, freedom of information and ethical practices for social research.

- Direct representations were made to the DTI, Ofcom, ONS, former ODPM, DES and DoH on issues that had a direct impact on market and social research practice.
- Representations were also made to the QCA, Sector Skills Development Agency and Learning & Skills Agency on issues relating to the status of MRS as an Awarding Body.
- The Census & Geodemographics Group commissioned social grade tables from ONS to assist market and social research in gaining best use of Census 2001 outputs, and participated in the user consultation for the 2011 Census.
- Relationships were maintained with key EU legislators and regulators.
- High quality coverage for MRS initiatives and industry-related issues was secured in a wide range of media.

Membership, Company Partner Service and networking

- The new streamlined membership structure was implemented.
- Council agreed to broadening access to Associate Membership by incorporating research experience into the entry criteria.



- The MRS Company Partner Service was launched and attracted 84 participating organisations in its first year.

- Discounts for members on a range of books and other publications were negotiated.

- A thorough review of membership communications was undertaken including an evaluation of the services provided and the communication channels used, benchmarking both against comparable organisations.

- Council's desire for enhanced inclusivity was served by improving accessibility to membership and qualifications, and by sustained support for networking regionally and in specialist sectors.

- R-Net, the young researchers' network, continued to flourish with a regular programme of professional development and social events. It launched a blog on a day in the life of 40 young researchers to generate awareness of their experiences.

- Foundations were laid for a new northern network that developed from the initial R-Net North activities which highlighted the need for networking opportunities for a broader range of practitioners.

- MRS Scotland continued its regular event programme including the launch of a successful 5-a-side football tournament.

- The Census & Geodemographics Group and Ethnic Research Network ran successful events during the year.

Professional development

- Access to all MRS qualifications was broadened with the

introduction of new courses at Certificate, Diploma and Masters levels.

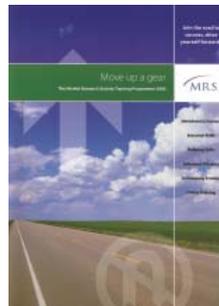
- Over 1,000 people now hold the MRS Advanced Certificate in Market & Social Research Practice.



- There was a 16% increase in training delegates and an 11% increase in the number of organisations sending staff on MRS courses.

- Registrations for online training increased by 11%.

- In-company training expanded into new overseas territories including Thailand and The Netherlands.



Promoting excellence

- The new Executive Editorial Board for the *International Journal of Market Research* completed its first year of operation during which it developed the advisory board and referees;

moved to six issues per year; launched a new website; changed the positioning to encourage more practitioner material; created a dialogue with readers; and streamlined the review process.



- The Research Excellence & Effectiveness Awards continued to thrive with new categories being introduced and additional organisations participating to present their awards at the sell-out Awards Dinner at the Park Lane Hotel.

- The MRS website (www.mrs.org.uk) was redesigned to incorporate the new marque and house style, and all sections were updated and expanded. This and further promotional work, including introduction of an RSS feed, resulted in a 70% increase in traffic to over 2,300 visits per day. There was a 25% increase in subscribers (to over 2,100) to the monthly MRS e-news bulletin.

- The Geodemographics Knowledge Base (www.geodemographics.org.uk) was relaunched with a more contemporary design, improved navigation and search facility which resulted in an increase in visitor numbers.

- Two more textbooks in the *Market Research in Practice* series were published by Kogan Page in association with MRS.



- Following a Council review, the work of the Library and Information Service was re-focused and *LitSearch*, the MRS literature sourcing service, was launched in early 2006 to provide members and Company Partners with tailored literature searches.



- The web-based MRS Research Portal was also launched to allow members and Company Partners to conduct self-service literature searches and to recommend information sources for desk research.

Research

- Circulation of *Research* magazine grew to 10,518.
- A new supplement, *Research Decisions*, was launched.
- The Editor of *Research* magazine made his debut at the Research

2006 conference, devising and chairing a session entitled *Pitch, Performance and Profit*, featuring presentations which were shortlisted for Conference Awards.

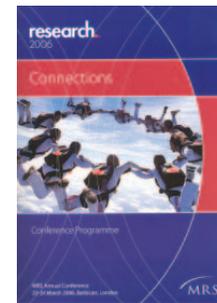


- Research* magazine launched its own annual Awards which were presented at the Research Excellence & Effectiveness Awards Dinner.
- Following the redesign of *Research*, the website (www.research-live.com) was relaunched in the same style with increased functionality. The number of registrants increased by 9% to over 12,300 and the number of page views grew by nearly 50% to 102,500 during the year.
- Research* became a media partner for and exhibited at the American Marketing Association annual conference in Chicago and the Semo Conference in Paris to boost the drive for international subscriptions.
- The *Research Buyer's Guide* was Highly Commended at the annual awards of the Directory & Database Publishers Association.



- The *Research Buyer's Guide* website (www.rbg.org.uk) continued to flourish with 300 new subscribers registering each month, and 46,000 page views requested (nearly 10% more than 2004-05).

- In its final year at the Barbican London, Research 2006: Connections, achieved 900 attendees, a 30% increase on the 2005 annual conference attendance. International delegates grew to almost 10%, and REs and SREs comprised one third of total participants.



- The Conference newspaper, *Research Extra*, was produced for the second year running for circulation not only to Research 2006 conference delegates but also to all MRS members.
- The first MRS online discussion board was launched for Research 2006 facilitating active discussion about the programme and industry issues in the weeks leading up to and after the conference.
- The Best of Research 2005 was held in Edinburgh for the second year running.
- Research Conferences ran a series of six one-day specialist events during the year focusing on topics such as the grey pound, researching kids and financial research.

Finance

- The following summary of key financial information is extracted from the audited accounts for the year 2005-06.
- A copy of the statutory Report and Accounts which will be submitted to Companies House is available on request from the MRS Director General, and will be provided for those members attending the AGM.
- Leasehold property was stated until March 1998 at historical cost. Thereafter, it has been stated at market value in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard (FRS11).
- MRS has a medium-term financial objective of strengthening its reserves (with particular emphasis on cash generated surpluses to improve liquidity) until they are equivalent to 4-6 months of expenditure.

Summary income and expenditure account (£'000)

Income	2005-06	2004-05
Individual membership subscriptions	670	645
Company Partner Service	42	-
Publications & information services	1,806	1,635
Training & qualifications	595	544
Conferences & seminars	403	366
Other services	236	194
Total	3,752	3,384

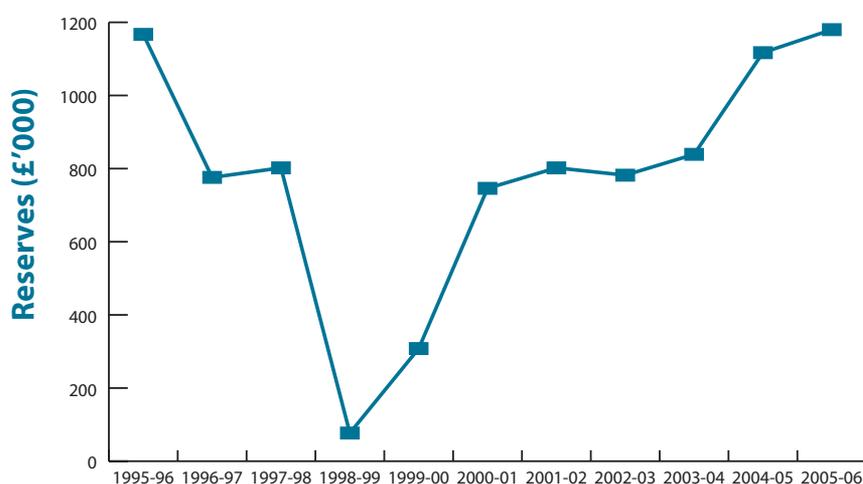
Expenditure	2005-06	2004-05
Cost of activities	1,400	1,288
Employment	1,691	1,468
Other administration	585	553
Net financing charges & taxation	48	50
Total	3,724	3,359

	2005-06	2004-05
Net surplus/(deficit)	28	25
Adjustment on property value	36	252
Contribution to reserves	64	277

Summary balance sheet (£'000)

	2005-06	2004-05
Tangible assets	2,251	1,727
Net current (liabilities)/assets	(16)	53
Long term liabilities	(1,055)	(663)
Reserves	1,180	1,117

MRS reserves 1996-2006



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Solicitors: Bates, Wells & Braithwaite, 2-6 Cannon Street, London EC4M 6YH