

Reaching Out
Annual Review 2006-07



Reaching Out

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE | JEREMY BULLMORE

THE MOST depressing bits in any DIY manual are those about the crucial importance of preparation. What you long to read is something like this: *"These new generation paints can be slapped on any old surface, however wet, cracked or greasy. Primers and undercoats? Forget 'em! Brush or roller? Who cares! Just one coat is all it takes. And ten minutes later, you'll have immaculately smooth, brilliantly covered walls and ceilings with a finish that will last a lifetime."*

That's what you long to read. What you actually read goes something like this: *"Under no circumstances skip on preparation time. Make sugar soap solution... clean surfaces thoroughly using bleach mixture in case of fungus... apply at least three coats of undercoat and/or primer... allow to dry overnight and rub down after each application... proper surface preparation invariably takes much longer than the actual application of paint. Allow for this in your budget and schedule."*

And, infuriatingly, it's all true. Those of us who have impatiently skimmed on the humdrum and unglamorous business of preparation have always lived to regret it. I don't suppose professional researchers will thank me for the analogy – but it seems to me that some of their most valuable

has much in common with the painstaking demands of home decorating.

As MRS seeks to reach out to a wider world, there can be no more important constituents to reach than those ultimately responsible, in both public and private sectors, for making decisions of quite frightening costs and implications.

To launch, or not to launch? To build, or not to build? To diversify, to invest, to merge, to bid, to float, to relocate, to expand, to rationalise? Except in hindsight, these are never easy decisions. By their outcome, huge sums of money will be in the balance and the lives of tens of thousands of people will be affected. Just occasionally, these decisions will be taken on the basis of existing knowledge and confident judgement – but, overwhelmingly, they will be influenced by research. This sobering fact has direct implications for both the providers of that research – and its commissioners.

For the providers, the agencies, it means they'd better get it right. Slipshod research is even more culpable than slipshod marketing counsel; its potential consequences are more fundamental and more lasting. The responsibility is a heavy one.

For the commissioners, our clients, it means all the things that the DIY manuals

warn us about. It means painstaking, often repetitive preparatory work. It means the patient expenditure of time as well as money. The risks of skimping on research are precisely the same as the risks of skimping on preparing surfaces. The only difference is the scale of consequence: the one, relatively trivial; the other, virtually immeasurable.

Another similarity: when a room has been freshly painted, no visitor exclaims: "What excellent preparatory work you must have undertaken!" The preparatory work remains invisible and largely unrecognised. Praise, entirely rightly, is reserved for the final finish.

When a commercial project has been successfully completed, no outsider exclaims: "What excellent research you must have undertaken!" Exploratory research remains invisible and largely unrecognised. Praise, entirely rightly, is reserved for the skill of the decision makers and the magnificence of the finished project.

So if I were to send one impertinent memo to those lonely individuals faced with the need to make momentous decisions, I'd borrow from the language of the DIY manuals. And I'd say: *"Under no circumstances skimp on the preparatory work. Thorough research may well take a great deal longer than the execution of the final decision. Please allow for this in your budget and schedule."*

"As MRS seeks to reach out to a wider world, there can be no more important constituents to reach than those ultimately responsible for making decisions of quite frightening costs and implications"

Jeremy Bullmore



Broadening the Footprint

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT | SIMON LIDINGTON

THE RESEARCH industry has a reputation for integrity and a focus on quality control envied by most other marketing and customer disciplines. MRS has played a crucial role in facilitating industry experts to develop a strong, modern *Code of Conduct*. We are pleasingly strong on protection. When it comes to illuminating the best that the broadest definition of our industry could offer, however, we are less impressive. There are many – including your current Chairman – who believe that, properly harnessed, research and insight stand in a pivotal position as facilitators of better consumer and customer understanding, great ideas and grounded decisions.

We have traditionally been seen as sample-based data providers. But if we are to move with the times we need to be seen as much more than that. Decision-makers are constantly interested in better sources of evidence and stimulus for new ways of doing things. They survive and thrive on competitive advantage, change and innovation, new ideas. Which opens the way for agencies/consultancies and in-house teams that focus on these things. I see two major areas of threat and opportunity for market, social and opinion research:

1 The advent of online panels, vast customer databases and more sophisticated data-mining techniques has brought the kind of behavioural analysis and “fast-food” research that clients are increasingly demanding.



“There are many who believe that, properly harnessed, research and insight stand in a pivotal position as facilitators of better consumer and customer understanding, great ideas and grounded decisions”

Simon Lidington

2 There is a growing appreciation that insight is a genuinely different discipline from research: one based on the assumption that change, innovation and improvement are not just desirable but *essential*, and that the role of consumer/customer evidence is to stimulate and enable stakeholders to change, innovate and improve in the most creative and advantageous ways.

Other industries see the potential in these areas. They approach them with creative and analytical skills that rival ours. They are experts at helping clients think differently. But they do not necessarily ground their creative skills in well-conducted consumer/customer research. Which gives us a fantastic opportunity.

In the future, therefore, I believe that MRS should essentially be about two things:

- 1** Maintaining mechanisms that ensure research is a corporately and socially responsible industry that cares deeply for the quality of the work done in its name.
- 2** Treating mechanisms that support and illuminate research not only as an industry known for delivering reliable data, information and knowledge but also as one increasingly famous for generating transformational insight based on a range of evidence-based approaches.

Laying the Groundwork

DIRECTOR GENERAL'S OVERVIEW | DAVID BARR

THE LAST year has been devoted largely to laying the groundwork for supporting the principal themes identified as priorities over the next few years.

Medium-term strategic plans

Several areas were identified as the focus of medium-term planning, and are referred to throughout this *Annual Review*:

- Serving a "wider footprint" of research, analysis, intelligence, insight and consultancy
- Development of new strands in existing services to address end-users of research, as well as creating an equivalent service for clients to parallel the success of the MRS Company Partner Service for agencies
- Supporting through our existing work the objective of external advocacy of the merits of market, social and opinion research, demonstrating its impact and effectiveness in illuminating critical decision-making in the commercial context and in public policy

- International extension of the outlook and activities of MRS
- Preparation of a medium-term financial strategy to sustain the plans for the next three to five years
- Preparation of an internal infrastructure sufficiently robust to sustain these aims as well as continuing to strengthen reserves.

Business process review

Our internal business systems and processes inevitably came under strain in sustaining the expansion of services for which they were not originally designed – the introduction of the MRS Company Partner Service, integration of BMRA services into MRS, plus the challenge of broadening the footprint.

A comprehensive business process review was completed, covering not only IT and finance functions and capacities, but also the overall handling of business which frequently involves several departments, data sharing and customer service issues,

as well as staff numbers and skills required. Several structural changes of personnel were undertaken, the outsourced IT support function was brought back in-house, and a replacement MRS-wide association management system was commissioned for installation during 2008.

Property enhancement

Work was completed by the summer of 2006 on the fourth floor of 15 Northburgh Street (purchased in February 2006) 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 meetings previously held off-site. Many other improvements to the internal fabric of the building were undertaken during 2006–07, and work on the exterior will be completed in 2007–08. It is particularly pleasing to report that this investment in commercial property has already returned a handsome dividend this year in valuation, and added over £600,000 to our reserves.

Financial progress

The contents of this *Annual Review* confirm that this has been a very busy year for MRS. Turnover increased by 4.6% in 2006–07, nearly twice as fast as total growth in the UK market research sector. This reflects a higher volume and broader range of activity. Reserves were greatly strengthened and a ten-year financial recovery completed. Nonetheless MRS is as exposed to trading volatility as any other business, and financing future ambitions will remain challenging. The work of the last year has certainly greatly improved the outlook for several years ahead.

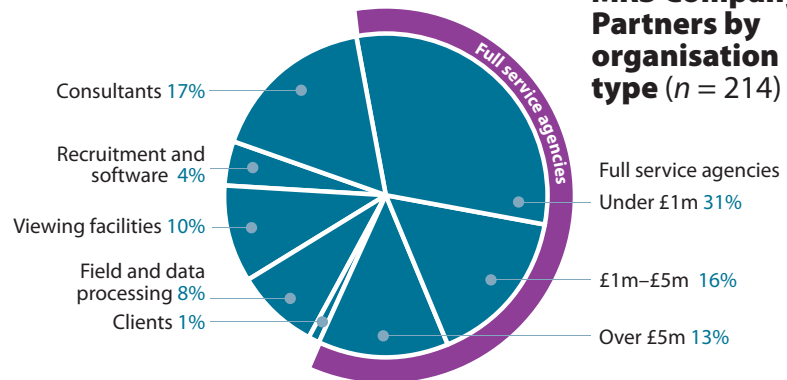


"The work of the last year has certainly greatly improved the outlook for several years ahead"

David Barr

A Business Association

MRS Company Partners by organisation type (n = 214)



IN THE two years following its launch in April 2005, the MRS Company Partner Service (CPS) attracted participation by 214 diverse organisations. This started the process of MRS taking on the mantle of a business association serving both agencies and client-side organisations in addition to its traditional role as a professional body and learned society. It also provided the framework for integrating most former BMRA services, which began in April 2006 and was completed during 2006-07. Several former BMRA Council and Committee Members have been prominently involved.

● **CPS Advisory Board:** The Board was set up to provide experienced, well-informed guidance to MRS Council on CPS operation and development. The Board's membership includes two former BMRA Council Members and reflects the diversity of MRS as a "broad church".

● **Standards:** The new compliance arrangements set up to apply to Company Partner organisations rather than individuals worked successfully. MRS was also a major contributor to the detail of ISO 20252 which was launched during the year and will replace BS 7911 in May 2008.

● **Expanding representation:** The quarterly *Public Affairs and Standards Update* sent to Company Partners demonstrates the extent to which many trade, commercial and employment issues have now been incorporated into the scope of MRS representational activities. Council also agreed MRS would join the European Federation of Associations of Market Research Organisations (EFAMRO) for one year to assess its effectiveness in extending MRS efforts internationally.

● **Training:** In September 2006, MRS began delivering some business skills courses from the former BMRA training programme. After a relatively modest start, demand increased and five courses were run. Business skills training provision was enriched by the introduction of ten new online courses, including negotiation, coaching, workload management and project management.

● **Networking:** MRS collaborated with the Association for Survey Computing (ASC) to provide a forum for those interested in industry technology issues. Quarterly technology evening events were successfully launched in January 2007; these have been oversubscribed. A workshop, attended

by representatives from field and data processing organisations, was held to explore the potential for an operations network which will be launched during 2007-08.

● **Awards:** *Research* magazine expanded its own industry awards programme to incorporate some former BMRA categories. These included Best Agency, Best New Agency, Innovative Employer, Best Newcomer and Best Research Campaign.

● **Industry statistics:** Two key surveys were inherited from BMRA. Participation in the Quarterly Market Trends Survey was boosted by 25% and the production schedule for the reports was shortened. The Annual Industry Survey was overhauled to include sector and methodology data, and employment levels. Despite participation improving to cover around two-thirds of industry turnover, the survey's ranking table (derived from companies willing to have their turnover published) continued to be unrepresentative of the industry. Publication of a more comprehensive industry league table is planned for autumn 2007.

MRS is set to become not only the world's largest business association in the research sector but also genuinely representative of the wide diversity in scale and type of business undertaking, commissioning and using research.

"During the year, the MRS Company Partner Service absorbed most of the services previously provided by BMRA. With over 200 MRS Company Partners, more organisations than ever before have access to the services and benefits of a business association to support their commitment to professionalism, research excellence and business effectiveness"

Ray Tiwari (Focused Sales Marketing), CPS Advisory Board Member and former BMRA Council Member



Closer to Individuals

DURING 2006-07, MRS continued to roll out its communications plan to keep its individual members, and also employees within Company Partner organisations, well informed about its activities, services and products.

The Personal Touch

The opening of the MRS training suite and meeting rooms in 2006 (see *Laying the Groundwork* on page 4) provided the opportunity for MRS to invite its members, Company Partners and other customers into its office to meet people working behind the scenes on their behalf.

“This year the MRS Market Research Standards Board has had a key focus on communicating about its work, using all channels from a new quarterly newsletter and annual review, to a series of face-to-face briefings”

Susan Blackall

(Research International),

MRS Council Member

● Training

The training suite opened for business in September with a *Basic Statistics* course; over the next few months, virtually all MRS research and business skills courses were brought in-house. The facility also permitted MRS to introduce a new series of breakfast seminars which will be supplemented with evening seminars during 2007-08.

● Members' Evenings

MRS took advantage of the new meeting facility to launch a series of Members' Evenings in October 2006. These proved a highly popular addition to the portfolio of membership benefits, most of them being oversubscribed. These events offer members the opportunity to listen to prominent speakers, meet MRS Council Members and staff, and network with fellow practitioners over a glass of wine or two. The aim is to organise eight events a year: two specifically for new members and the remaining six open to all.

● Briefings

The training suite was used for a range of events and consultation exercises organised by the MRS Standards and Networking Teams. The quarterly Standards Briefings for MRS Company Partners were brought in-house. In addition, twice-yearly "How to get the most from the MRS Company Partner Service" briefings were introduced to enable representatives from these organisations to meet key staff and learn more about MRS activities to ensure they gain best value from their CPS packages.

The Written Word

● Company Partner employees

Monthly e-newsletters have been sent for some time to the nominated contacts within Company Partner organisations. In 2006-07, quarterly e-newsletters for their staff were introduced which could be circulated via e-mail or placed on their internal intranet; these highlighted all the products and services to which they had access.

● MRSB

The Market Research Standards Board (MRSB) also recognised a need for more effective communication with members and Company Partners. In early 2006-07, it published an annual review of its activities and introduced a quarterly e-newsletter, the *Public Affairs and Standards Update*. The latter publication provides news on the latest legal and standards issues.

● Electronic alerts

Members now have a portfolio of regular electronic communications to which they can subscribe to receive the most appropriate information from MRS as it becomes available. These include:

- the monthly *mrs e-news*, which carries details of what's new on the four MRS websites
- the weekly industry news and jobs alert from *research-live.com*
- the quarterly *Public Affairs and Standards Update*
- regular or occasional e-mail bulletins from MRS networks.

The Single Voice

“Through its advocacy programme, MRS is planning to strengthen the visibility of research to enable greater recognition of its value in the boardroom”

Crispin Beale (Royal Mail),
MRS Council Member

MRS HAS BOTH the privilege and the responsibility of being the most widely recognised contact point and representative association for market, social and opinion research. It has a very diverse “broad church” range of individual members and, through its Company Partner Service, is rapidly developing its role as a business association, serving organisations on both the supply side and demand side of the sector.

It is very effective at *defending* research through setting standards and enforcing compliance, and by working with legislators and regulators to enhance their understanding of research and avoid encroachment of unwelcome restrictions which could arise from “the law of unintended consequence”. Now there is a desire to become more proactive at *advocating* the benefits of research to business decision-makers, public policy-makers, and respondents.

Research is at the heart of a huge number of commercial and public policy decisions, and is critical to the effectiveness of these decisions. The corollary of greater influence, however, is that the social and

commercial consequences of poor research can be more than simply irritating; they can be devastating (see *President’s Message: Reaching Out* on page 2).

There is, therefore, a considerable onus on the industry, both nationally and internationally, to ensure that its standards and enforcement of compliance are of the highest order, not simply in terms of ethics but also in terms of rigour, relevance, process and quality of thought. Just as the consequences of poor research can be devastating, similarly the consequences of MRS advocating an industry prepared to entertain poor research standards or inadequate commitment to enforcement of self-regulation would be hugely damaging to MRS and to the industry itself.

Nonetheless, many research practitioners consider that their work does not receive the respect that its value merits among business and public sector decision-makers. Although MRS can certainly contribute to changing that perception, the greatest impact on this situation should be from the conduct of researchers themselves.

As one industry leader recently and

eloquently expressed it: “The frequency with which we bemoan our inability to ‘get a seat at the table’ is depressing. No one ‘gets’ a seat at the table ever. They earn it. And no industry is more capable of earning that seat than the research industry. We provide the insights that drive the world’s businesses, governments and NGOs. When we combine those insights with the ability to predict their real impact – particularly financial impact – and tell our story in a compelling way, we’re guaranteed our seat at the table.”

The greater prominence of insight, CRM, data mining and an array of sophisticated qualitative techniques has also highlighted the value of a broader definition of research within many client organisations and some agencies.

However, research is a fragmented and very diverse industry, and no individual company within it – no matter how large – can or will speak powerfully enough to serve the sector as a whole. The industry does need a single powerful voice to speak and act on its behalf, and MRS recognises its responsibility to ensure that its activities are geared to supporting that wider objective.

Simon Lidington
featured in *Public
Service Review*,
November 2006



Global Influence

MRS CONTINUES to be a very positive brand internationally. Its reputation is based on distinction in development and enforcement of professional standards, excellent publications and information services, and innovation in skills development through training courses and conferences.

MRS has been very successful in exerting influence internationally to protect the legislative and regulatory environment for market research in the UK. However, consideration was given during the year as to whether the strength of this international positioning was adequately reflected not only in the international availability of MRS services but especially in contributing effort towards multinational policy and representation via EFAMRO, ISO and ICC.

“Research is a global business. MRS must have a presence in the international arena. This should be for all its activities: not only products and services but also standards and representation”

Simon Lidington,
MRS Chairman

International Representation

EFAMRO

Having developed via the CPS into a business association as well as a professional body (see *A Business Association* on page 5), MRS became eligible to join EFAMRO and did so at the beginning of 2007. Steps were also taken to reinforce its relationships not only with the principal associations representing leading European markets but also with CASRO (USA) and JMRA (Japan).

ISO

The Market Research Quality Standards Association (MRQSA) has been a leading innovator in the UK in achieving the creation of BS 7911. This was used extensively by the International Organisation for Standardisation in drafting ISO 20252 to provide market, social and opinion research process standards for international businesses.

MRS is a stakeholder in MRQSA and has contributed technical expertise to both the UK and the international standards. MRS believes these developments to be clearly advantageous for many agencies serving particular types of clients, and in negotiation with their purchasing departments.

Other agencies will find formal accreditation to these standards less appropriate to their business and their clients. In seeking to broaden its own footprint, MRS is well aware of the blurring of boundaries in business information and market research, and that many research

organisations are branching out into non-research activities where the traditional standards mechanisms, such as ISO, are less relevant. MRS needs to devise suitable alternative standards frameworks which are fit for the 21st-century business model to ensure that the sector retains its self-regulatory status.

ICC

As a long-term member of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), the world business organisation, MRS has been influential in recent discussions about the ICC's new consolidated Code. This Code currently excludes market research because of the special co-branding arrangement with ESOMAR. However, the current ICC/ESOMAR Code is updated insufficiently frequently to serve a fast-evolving industry.

MRS would prefer there to be an international standards infrastructure in which all associations have a genuine stakeholding. Such a scenario could exist via ICC issuing a robust and durable set of international principles, leaving country-specific rules to be written by associations in support of these principles to reflect diversity of legal jurisdictions, business cultures and market conditions. While harmonisation of rules is desirable, uniformity is impossible and can lead to undermining of compliance with codes and, therefore, of self-regulation itself. Discussions with ICC are continuing.

International Access to MRS Products and Services

Membership

MRS has always welcomed members from around the world, whether British expatriates or overseas nationals, who find value in its internationally respected products and services. For many years, 450–500 MRS members (about 6% of the total membership) have been based outside the UK. They can be found in 70 countries predominantly in Europe (41%), Asia (17%), North America (15%) and Australasia (14%). Half of them are at very senior levels within their companies and 30% work for client-side organisations.

Qualifications

MRS qualifications are respected throughout the world market and social research profession, and their international popularity continues to go from strength to strength. During 2006–07 candidates from Bulgaria, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Malaysia, Malta, Morocco, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, Saudi Arabia, South Africa and Tanzania registered for MRS qualifications.

The number of international centres also continued to grow. GfK NOP's training programme for its staff in India was accredited as a new International Professional Development Scheme Centre; Makini College in Nairobi was accredited as an Advanced Certificate CIM Exemption Route Centre; and the International Institute of Business in Ukraine continued as an Advanced Certificate Centre.

Training

MRS training has broadened its international reach each year and 2006–07 was no exception. Delegates from all over the world attended courses at MRS, welcomed trainers to their offices for in-company training or bought access to online courses. Participants from Belgium, Cyprus, Ireland, Nigeria, Poland, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine, USA and Yemen benefited from MRS training courses during the year.

Publications

Research magazine and its news and jobs website (www.research-live.com) greatly extended their international scope of news and editorial coverage as well as circulation and readership during the year.

Likewise, the *Research Buyer's Guide* and its website (www.rbg.org.uk) reached many more non-UK buyers. In 2007–08 the RBG website will be further developed to focus on worldwide suppliers capable of undertaking international research projects.

The *International Journal of Market Research* continued to have a strong global academic readership, and also extensive international usage by the marketing and advertising communities via both current and archival material available on www.warc.com.

“By extending its MRS Advanced Certificate programme into India, GfK NOP has become the first MRS overseas accredited research supplier. Professional development has been a key driver in staff satisfaction and we envisage this will result in a high demand for learning leading to an MRS qualification”

Jason Flynn (GfK NOP)

Highlights of the Year

Corporate

Council agreed a new medium-term financial strategy.

Return on investment in the property at 15 Northburgh Street added over £600,000 to MRS reserves and a ten-year financial recovery was completed.

The fourth floor at the MRS offices was refurbished to provide a new suite of training and meeting rooms.

A comprehensive business process review was

completed and implementation of the main action points commenced.

MRS took on the role of business association in addition to its existing role of professional body and learned society.

Council agreed a policy of serving a "broader footprint" of research, analysis, intelligence, insight and consultancy.

Implementation began of Council's policy of

proactive advocacy to demonstrate the value of market, social and opinion research.

Council conducted research amongst members of their perceptions of response rates in 2006.

MRS undertook the Quarterly Market Trends Survey and the Annual Industry Survey inherited from the former BMRA: participation in both was boosted significantly and production improvements implemented.

Individual membership, Company Partner Service and networking

Membership numbers decreased to 7,572, mainly the result of the continuing fall in Field membership year-on-year, the increase in subscription fees introduced in January 2006 and members leaving the industry.

Research was conducted amongst Field Members on their views about MRS and their membership benefits.

Members' Evenings were launched, most of which were oversubscribed, and became a popular addition to the range of membership benefits.

The portfolio of regular electronic communications continued to be expanded, enabling members to subscribe to receive the most appropriate information from MRS as it becomes available.

The MRS Company Partner Service grew steadily with the number of participating organisations reaching 214 by the end of its second year, including large and small agencies, consultancies, field and data processing companies, viewing facilities, clients, software suppliers and recruitment agencies.

The former BMRA's services were integrated successfully within the CPS framework.

A CPS Advisory Board was set up to provide guidance on CPS operations and development.

A regular programme of communications for MRS Company Partners and their employees was implemented including e-newsletters, quarterly standards briefings, and 'how to get the most from the CPS' briefings.

MRS and ASC successfully launched a series of quarterly evening events providing a forum for those interested in industry technology issues.

A workshop was held with representatives from field and data processing organisations to explore the potential for an operations network due for launch in 2007-08.

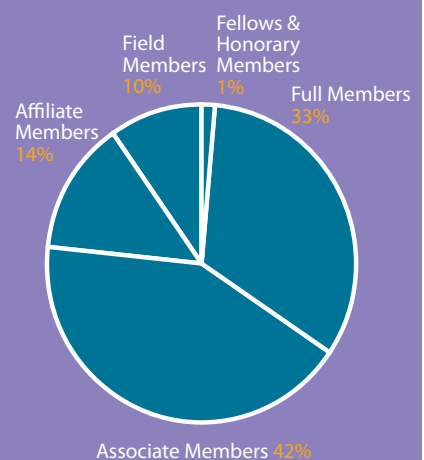
R-Net, the young researchers' network, and MRS Scotland continued with their programmes of professional development and social events throughout the year, and the regular sporting events were held during the summer.

The new NortheRN network was successfully launched to facilitate networking, best practice and business exchange across the north of England, drawing its membership from the wider marketing and development communities.

The Census & Geodemographics Group ran a successful seminar on *Geography and People*, held a consultation briefing and expanded the online Geodemographics Knowledge Base.

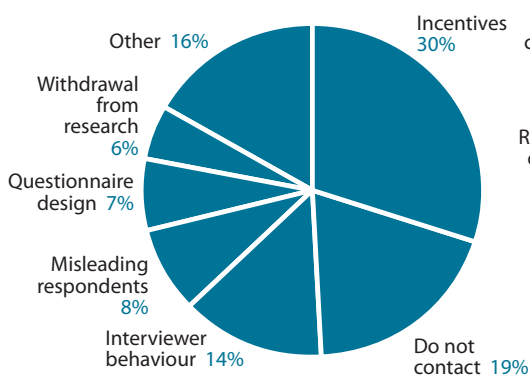
Co-operation continued with several other associations particularly in terms of reciprocal publicity for events and activities.

MRS membership by grade at 31 March 2007
(n = 7,572)

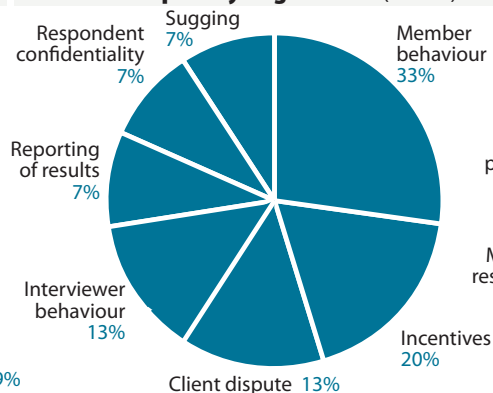


Complaints completed in 2006-07

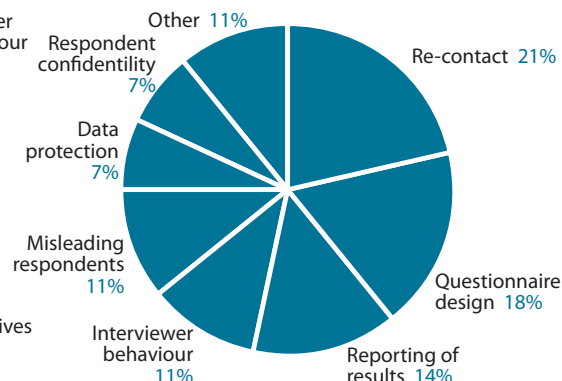
Minor complaints handled by Secretariat (n = 73)



Cases investigated under the Disciplinary Regulations (n = 15)



Cases investigated under the Company Partner Complaints Procedure (n = 28)



Codeline queries 2006-07 (n = 515)



Standards, policy and representation

The questionnaire design, qualitative research and B2B research guidelines were updated to be consistent with the revised MRS *Code of Conduct*.

New draft regulations on the conduct of consultation projects and using research techniques for non-research purposes were issued for comment.

The regulations on data protection were updated with more practical examples to assist practitioners in interpreting the legislation.

Codeline received 515 queries, an increase of 55%.

The Standards section of the MRS website was expanded with new features including an A-Z listing of documents to improve site navigation.

The online standards FAQs were updated to reflect changes to MRS guidelines. New topics included emerging issues such as product testing, reporting adverse medical events and monitoring telephone interviews. A checklist for food and drink hall tests was provided.

A quarterly e-newsletter, *Public Affairs and Standards Update*, was introduced for MRS members and Company Partners providing news and information on the latest legal and standards issues.

Compliance was strengthened with the roll-out of the MRS Company Partner Service Complaints Procedure: 29 complaints against organisations were investigated during 2006-07. The Disciplinary Regulations were used to investigate 21 complaints against individual members.

The new ISO 20252 for market and social research was issued in April 2006. MRS advised members regarding its introduction and phasing out of BS 7911.

MRS continued contributing to the drafting of the new ISO for access panels.

MRS standards schemes continued to be an essential data collection tool: 118 organisations subscribed to the Interviewer Identity (IID) Card Scheme; nearly 60,000 IID cards were issued; and 14,603 calls were received by the Freephone service.

The text for the MRS Thank You Leaflet was updated.

The sixth edition of *Occupation Groupings: A Job Dictionary* was published in print and PDF formats; 1,406 copies were sold.

The annual Field Conference continued to be the key event for data collection practitioners.

Half-day legal seminars on field issues were introduced and will become a regular fixture in

the MRS calendar; three were held in early 2007. MRS continued to engage direct with members, Company Partners and research practitioners on both supply and client sides via a series of internal and external presentations, briefings and consultation meetings.

Discussions were held with telephone software suppliers regarding silent calls and predictive diallers to update them on the new MRS regulations and associated legislative requirements.

Direct representations were made to the Department of Trade and Industry regarding rolled-up holiday pay, statutory paid leave entitlements, part-time workers, the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive, the Services Directive and the creation of the Local Better Regulation Office.

MRS responded to the Gambling Commission's Issues Paper on Prize Competitions and Free Draws, and to the Department of Constitutional Affairs (now the Ministry of Justice) consultation on increased penalties for the misuse of personal data. MRS and its Census & Geodemographics Group made a number of direct representations on census and statistics matters, and provided responses to several ONS consultations.

MRS made representations to the Qualifications & Curriculum Authority, the Sector Skills Development Agency and the Learning & Skills Agency regarding issues relating to its Awarding Body status.

Discussions continued with Ofcom, the Office of the Information Commissioner and the Ministry of Justice regarding on-going issues such as the use of predictive diallers, data protection, freedom of information and ethical practices for research.

MRS public affairs activities were cited during parliamentary proceedings including its contribution to the independence of statistics consultation, and the role of MRS and its *Code of Conduct* in regulating market, social and opinion research.

MRS joined EFAMRO in early 2007, and reinforced its relationships with European associations and with CASRO and JMRA.

Discussions with the ICC continued regarding its new consolidated Code.

In total, 82 separate items of positive news coverage and features were achieved in a diverse range of publications for MRS initiatives and industry-related issues (*details on page 13*).

Complaints received

	2006-07	2005-06
Disciplinary cases		
Upheld	4	2
Not upheld	38	25
Ongoing	8	7
Total disciplinary cases	50	34
Minor complaints resolved by the Secretariat	73	76
Total complaints received	123	110

Highlights of the Year continued

Professional development

Over 600 candidates registered for MRS qualifications, including a 40% increase in candidature for the MRS/City & Guilds Level 2 Certificate in Market & Social Research.

An Introduction to Market & Social Research: Planning & Using Research Tools & Techniques was published as an accompanying textbook for the Level 2 Certificate.

The MRS Advanced Certificate for Market & Social Research Practice was re-accredited by the QCA as a Level 5 qualification (increased from Level 3).

The number of centres that deliver the MRS Advanced Certificate grew by 50% (from ten to fifteen), and the number of CIM centres that applied to become Exemption Route Centres for the qualification increased from two to seven.

The first examinations were held for the new MRS Diploma in Market & Social Research Practice, and an additional centre was accredited to deliver the qualification.

The MRS Professional Development Scheme expanded internationally with the accreditation of GfK NOP's training programme in India.

The National Occupational Standards for Marketing and Sales activities (which includes standards for market research devised by MRS) were successfully launched in September 2006 by Sir Paul Judge and Sir Digby Jones.

MRS opened its Training Suite for business and brought most of its courses in-house.

In total, 718 delegates from 329 organisations attended 52 MRS training courses.

MRS integrated the former BMRA's business skills courses within its own training programme.

Ten new online business skills courses were launched.

A series of breakfast seminars was introduced, which will be expanded and complemented with evening events in 2007-08.

The MRS flagship Summer School was re-launched as *Research in Action*.



Promoting excellence

The Executive Editorial Board for the *IJMR* continued with its initiatives to develop and promote the content to attract more practitioner material, literature reviews and themed issues. The level of submissions increased and the time required for the review process was reduced.

The Research Excellence & Effectiveness Awards continued to thrive with new categories being introduced and a larger venue being required: 530 guests attended the dinner at the Royal Lancaster Hotel (an increase of 25%).

MRS Gold Medals were presented to John Samuels and Tony Cowling (*right*) in recognition of their outstanding lifetime contribution to research.



Development of the MRS website (www.mrs.org.uk) continued to expand the content and improve navigation. Traffic increased by more than a third to over 3,000 visits per day. Subscribers to the monthly MRS e-news bulletin increased by 10% to over 2,300.

The Geodemographics Knowledge Base (www.geodemographics.org.uk) continued to grow with a new section added for real-time geodemographics and an expanded section for national statistics sites for all European countries.

A textbook on *Employee Research* was published by Kogan Page in association with MRS, bringing the total number of titles in the *Market Research in Practice* series to eight.

Following the launch of *LitSearch*, the MRS literature sourcing service, and the MRS Research Portal, nine resource sheets on a wide variety of topics were produced to provide members and Company Partner employees with 'instant' literature searches.

Research

Within *Research* magazine, there was a drive to boost the emphasis on international news stories, as well as a general increase in the space afforded to news overall. This fed through to a new features section that replaced special reports.



The online home of *Research* magazine (www.research-live.com) continued to grow as registrant numbers increased by 17.5% to over 15,000 with an average of 23,000 unique visitors every month.

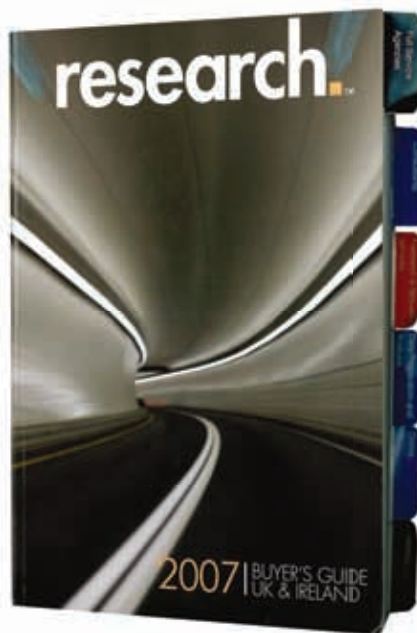
The Editor of *Research* magazine won the Special Contribution to Conference Award for his chairing of Pitch, Performance and Profitability at Research 2006.

Following the integration of BMRA services, *Research* magazine expanded the categories of its own industry Awards to include Best Agency, Best New Agency, Best Newcomer, Best Research Campaign and Innovative Employer of the Year.

A new section of online research companies was added to the *Research Buyer's Guide* to reflect this fast moving and expanding market.

The *RBG* website (www.rbg.org.uk) continued to flourish with 320 new registrants each month, and 47,500 page views requested (nearly 5% more than 2005–06). The website was redesigned to bring it in line with the *research-live* portal, to benefit from increased commercial traffic.

MRS celebrated 50 years of the Annual Conference at its Golden Jubilee event, *Research 2007: the next fifty years*, in Brighton. With over 1000 attendees and record levels of sponsorship, the conference was a great success.



Media coverage

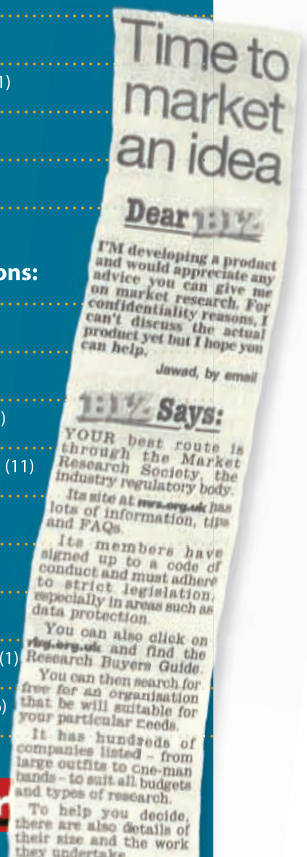
In 2006–07 positive news coverage and features for market research and MRS were secured in:

National and trade media:

- Admap* (3)
- Brand Strategy* (2)
- B2B Marketing* (2)
- Daily Mirror* (1)
- Government Business Review* (1)
- Hobsons Management Guide* (1)
- Marketing* (6)
- Marketing Week* (9)
- Public Services Review* (1)
- Research* (8)
- The Independent* (2)
- The Marketer* (1)

Online publications:

- Brandrepublic.com (8)
- Business in a Can (1)
- Daily Research News (5)
- Market Research World (11)
- mrweb.com (5)
- Research-live.com (7)
- Research World (1)
- TheWiseMarketer.com (1)
- World Opinion News (6)



Finance

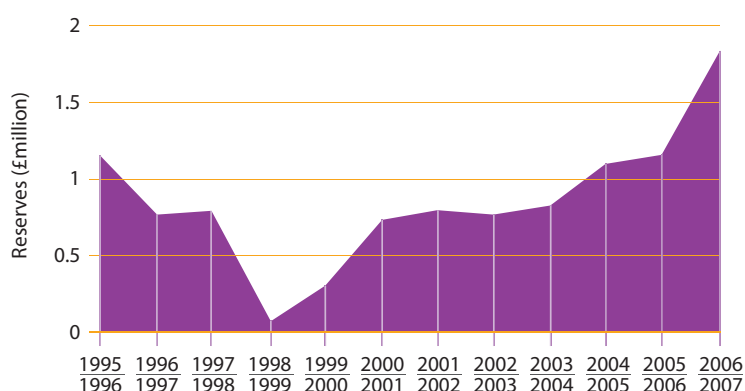
This summary of key financial information is extracted from the audited accounts for the year 2006–07.

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 1988 at historical cost. Thereafter, it has been stated at market value in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard FRS 15. As a result of a property revaluation undertaken in March 2007, MRS has recorded a £632,000 favourable variance in reserves in the current financial year. £193,000 of this gain has been used to eliminate property revaluation losses incurred in previous years, and is reported in the Income and Expenditure Account. The balance of £439,000 is shown as a revaluation reserve in the Balance Sheet.

MRS has a medium-term financial objective of establishing and maintaining its reserves (with particular emphasis on cash-generated surpluses to improve liquidity) at a minimum of six months' operating expenditure.

MRS Reserves 1996–2006



	£'000	£'000
	2006–07	2005–06

Summary Income and Expenditure Account

Income		
Individual membership subscriptions	704	670
Company Partner Service fees (net)	111	42
Publications and information services	1,809	1,806
Training and qualifications	520	595
Conferences and seminars	535	403
Other services	247	236
Total	3,926	3,752
Expenditure		
Cost of activities	1,345	1,400
Employment	1,785	1,691
Other administration	672	585
Net financing charges and taxation	77	48
Total	3,879	3,724
Net surplus / (deficit)	47	28
Adjustment on property value	193	36
Contribution to Reserves	240	64

Summary Balance Sheet

Tangible assets	2,891	2,251
Net current assets / (liabilities)	(79)	(16)
Long term liabilities	(953)	(1,055)
Net Assets	1,859	1,180
Revaluation reserve	439	—
Income and expenditure account	1,420	1,180
Reserves	1,859	1,180

About MRS

With members in more than 70 countries, MRS is the world's largest association serving all those with professional equity in provision or use of market, social and opinion research, and in business intelligence, market analysis, customer insight and consultancy.

MRS has a diverse membership of **individuals** at all levels of experience and seniority within agencies, consultancies, support services, client-side organisations, the public sector and the academic community.

It also serves MRS Company Partners agencies, suppliers of support services, buyers and end-users – of all types and scale who are committed throughout their **organisations** to supporting the core MRS values of professionalism, research excellence and business effectiveness.

In consultation with its individual members and Company Partners, MRS supports best practice by setting and enforcing industry standards. The commitment to uphold the MRS *Code of Conduct* is supported by the Codeline service and a wide range of specialist guidelines.

MRS contributes significantly to the enhancement of skills and knowledge by offering various qualifications and membership grades, as well as training and professional development resources.

MRS enables its members and Company Partners to be very well-informed through the provision of a wide range of publications, information services and conferences.

MRS offers many opportunities for meeting, communicating and networking across sectors and disciplines, as well as within specialisms.

As "the voice of market research", MRS defends and promotes research in its advocacy and representational efforts.

Through its media relations and public affairs activities, MRS aims to create the widest possible understanding of the process and value of market, social and opinion research, and to achieve the most favourable climate of opinion and legislative environment for research.

Officers 2006-07

President

Jeremy Bullmore

Vice President

Eamonn Santry

Council

Chairman

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Nikki Bell

Susan Blackall

Ian Brace

Louise Edwards

Geoff Gosling

Tony Keen*

Carole Lehman

Rowland Lloyd

Susan Rogers

Leslie Sopp

Alan Wilson

*until February 2007

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

