Why Market Research Firms Should Be Positive About PR

Contributed by Rippleout Marketing
Tuesday, 03 June 2014
Last Updated Wednesday, 18 June 2014

Before I begin, and before some of the purists savage me, I should caveat this by saying that yes, there are some PR firms out there who do do market research a disservice. Small sample sizes, claiming crazy headlines from data which is hardly even contained with the report, nevermind being a key element.
However, I think that there is also a lot that MR has to gain from public relations, and wider marketing and communications industries. This is, obviously, true in as far as the two disciplines can assist market research firms in growing their market share and in communicating their own successes and benefits to potential clients, but it is also true for market research as a wider industry.   By its very nature market research is something companies and organisations tend to carry out in order to give themselves a professional advantage. It is valuable data â€“ detailing strengths, weakness, opportunities, threats, key growth markets, specific segments of the population to target and other vital knowledge which can help a company grow and prosper, or at least avoid languishing and stagnating.   By the same token however, it is very rare that companies choose to publish the market research they carry out â€“ whys spend hundreds of thousands of pounds interrogating a market place to establish a customer need, only to hand over your advantage through publishing the information freely? Generally, market research stays in a locked cupboardâ€¦and often, it rarely ever sees the light of day once it has served its initial purpose. As a result of this lack of publication, the public have limited exposure to market research and how it has changed in recent years. (Mostly) gone are the days of the middle-aged woman holding a clip-board in the High Street and trying desperately to gather feedback on what respondents think of a product they have probably never even thought about as being anything more than a necessity. We are in the age of online surveys, tablets, and online communities. Mobile surveys. Google Glass. PR companies and the media outlets that pick up their surveys are an important part of developing this new, modern, perception of market research as, not the invasive woman in the street, but the dispenser of interesting and useful findings, gained in a potentially interesting way, that actually matter to us as consumers. A great example is a survey carried out in 2010 by Cow PR, on behalf of the More Than insurance firm, which asked 50 former burglars what their tricks of the trade were. One â€“ checking on Facebook and Twitter for people on holidayâ€™ â€“ is something none of us think about when going away and sending images of our bikini-clad selves or, if youâ€™re like me, pictures of lager and a pool, back to the social networks.   Perhaps a slightly more â€˜intellectualâ€™ example would be a recent piece of research published on the Guardian found that those who read less were "more likely to be male, under 30, and have lower levels of qualifications, happiness, and satisfaction within their lives.â€• The title, discussing a â€˜deep class divide in reading habitsâ€™, perhaps suggested more of a correlation than the researchers noted in the report, but nonetheless, the research was intriguing enough to inspire more than 6,000 social shares, and hundreds of comments on the Guardian website alone â€“ and that has to be a good thing for market research. Both these examples are of interesting pieces of research which were of use to people, and were actively promoted by Public Relations firms or the media. Both are good examples of using research to inform and engage, and both â€“ probably â€“ help to boost the publicâ€™s view of market research to some extent. You can find out more about Rippleout Marketing by visiting the marketing consultancy at their website, on the Rippleout Twitter account, Rippleout LinkedIn page, or Rippleout Marketing's Google+ page. They are also on Facebook .Â