Too close to call? IMPACT 2015

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MRS challenges a special â€˜Poll of Pollstersâ€™ to call the outcome of this yearâ€™s general election
Ahead of the most competitive General Election in decades, the Market Research Society (MRS) will examine the health of political polling in Britain at IMPACT2015. A panel of the U.K.'s leading pollsters and election analysts will face up to each other and the future.

In the wake of the Scottish referendum and political change on the Continent, the â€˜Poll of Pollstersâ€™ panel will provide a timely review of how the electorateâ€™s views and values are captured. Â

Chairing the discussion, Deborah Mattinson, former leading consultant to the Labour party and Founding Director at BritainThinks, will be joined by:
â€¢Â Â Â Lord Andrew Cooper, founding director of Populus and former head of strategy for the Conservatives.
â€¢Â Â Â James Morris, partner at Greenberg Quinlan Rosner and an adviser to Labour leader Ed Milliband.
â€¢Â Â Â Mike Smithson, editor of PoliticalBetting.com (and a former Liberal councillor) and an expert on how well the polls might translate to votes.

With 194 marginal seats, record lows for the Tories and Labour, and the LibDem retreat, the panel will consider how the insurgent parties â€“ especially UKIP and SNP â€“ have affected the ability of pollsters to deliver insight into the democratic process. Â

The Poll of Posters will form part of the two-day IMPACT 2015 conference based on the theme â€˜consumer understanding in an uncertain worldâ€™.Â An impressive speaker line-up will probe the key ideas challenging consumers, commerce and society, as the event showcases the very best in research, data and business understanding.

The programme will include contributions and insights from:Â General Sir Richard Shirreff, ex-Deputy Supreme Allied Commander of NATO, on the shifting international landscape; Paul Polman, CEO of Unilever; Sebastian Faulks, author of modern day classic â€˜Birdsongâ€™, on the nuances of masterful story-telling; and artist and designer Brendan Dawes on the lessons from developing his data-driven apps.

A client panel, led by editor of Research-live.com and Impact magazine Jane Bainbridge, will add to the debate, as decision-makers express their views on the sector and, crucially, what informs their budget allocation.

Jane Frost CBE, Chief Executive of MRS said: â€œThis yearâ€™s General Election is arguably the closest to call for decades a the British public faces an array of new choices.Â Will the recent popularity of UKIP and SNP translate into votes at Westminster? Â

â€œOur expert line-up on the Poll of Pollsters aims to distil what recent political events mean for polling - just one way in which IMPACT 2015 will highlight the role of rigorous research in helping society and business to support democracy, listen to and focus on consumers and citizens.â€•Â Â Â